

Daily The Spokesman

RAWALPINDI



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No political motives behind Imran's arrest by NAB: Ahsan Iqbal

Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday said that Imran Khan's arrest was made in a graft case by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the government had nothing to do with it. This is an arrest which is not motivated under any political victimization and not done at the behest of the government. (Details on Page 8)

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Ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Prof. Ahsan Iqbal in a group photo with recipient students of Prime Minister Electric Wheelchairs Distribution Scheme Ceremony in Islamabad on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Mariyum condemns attacks on building, offices of Radio Pakistan & APP in Peshawar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday strongly condemned attacks on the building and offices of Radio Pakistan and APP in Peshawar.

The attack on the offices of Radio Pakistan and APP by PTI armed gangs was condemnable and deplorable, she said in a message issued by her office.

The minister said following the pattern of PTV attack under Imran Khan's instructions, PTI workers today attacked Radio Pakistan and APP buildings.

She said violence against government employees including women, vandalism and



damage to property were acts of terrorism.

Mariyum Aurangzeb said armed groups of PTI set on fire the Chaghi Mountain Monument and Radio Auditorium, which gave an idea of their state of mind.

She asked the Director General Radio Pakistan to file an FIR against the miscreants.

The minister said the miscreants also tried to stop government broadcasting by cutting off lines, which was a serious crime.

PTI chief's arrest in accordance with law; Miscreants to be dealt with iron hand: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated that the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had arrested Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Imran Khan legally and on the basis of corruption and corrupt practice in the Al Qadir Trust case, involving a whopping amount of Rs 60 billion (£ 190 million).

The prime minister, in a televised address to the nation, referred to the violent spree unleashed by the PTI leadership and their supporters across the country inflicting severe damages, sternly warning the miscreants that they would be dealt with an iron hand.

"These terrorist and anti-state elements are being warned to desist from taking laws into their hands, otherwise they will be dealt with in iron hands.

Safeguarding the motherland and its ideology is more precious than their lives. We will not let their nefarious designs succeed," he maintained.

The prime minister said the rule of law meant facing all the

cases legally. Inflicting damages to public and private properties amounted to terrorist acts.

"All are equal before the laws; these are the Islamic teachings and the beauty of democracy," he said while advising the PTI chairman to face the NAB cases legally.

The prime minister said the Islamabad High Court had also termed Imran Niazi's arrest legal and observed that NAB acted in accordance with the law.

He further said that the country's past political history was very unpleasant based upon vendetta which had never yielded good results. The political parties learned from those experiences and reached to the 'Charter of Democracy' by vowing to work under the Constitution.

Under the same passion, on April 11 last year, they took over the responsibilities of the government and did not adopt the vengeance-based approach as manifested by the PTI's government led by Imran Niazi against their political opponents, he added.

"Cases were decided on the basis of faces," he said, adding the PTI's former ministers even



days ahead used to announce that a specific political leader would be arrested on a particular day, while Imran Niazi also kept on announcing that a wicket from the opposition side would fall soon.

The prime minister elaborated that almost all the leaders, now sitting in the first two rows of the National Assembly, were sent to jails on false charges and there was no one to take notice during the previous regime of PTI.

Rana Sanatullah was arrested on concocted charges of carrying 15 kilograms of heroin which was

a black day in the history of Pakistan, he added.

The prime minister said their sisters, daughters, sons and even relatives were not spared 'in the pursuance of blind vengeance', which also badly hampered the national development.

Due to the countrywide demands, concerns and serious apprehensions of the bureaucracy and the business community, they brought amendments to the NAB laws, he added.

In the past, the prime minister said, when they were in the opposition and referred to the neces-

sary amendments in the NAB laws, their genuine demands were spurned by the PTI's leadership accusing them of seeking NROs.

But the fact was that in the opposition, they adopted a national approach with responsibility.

The prime minister explained that in the previous NAB laws, an accused was arrested on 90 days remand but after the amendment, that period was reduced to 15 days only which was in accordance with the fairness of the contemporary laws and under courts' observations, adding the first beneficiary of that amendment was now Imran Niazi.

About Imran Khan's Al-Qadir Trust corruption case, the prime minister said it was strange how could a federal cabinet approved a huge amount related to the national kitty without opening an envelope. The cabinet members were kept in the dark, he opined.

He further questioned whether such an attitude was permitted by the religious teachings, existing laws and the democratic system that an accused should refuse to face the court of law.

Constant cooperation must for addressing challenges to constitutional democracies: Tarar



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday said the constant contact and cooperation among the global states was a must for addressing pressing challenges faced by the constitutional democracies.

Addressing the plenary session titled Constitutions in the Changing World—Balance Stability and Adapt-

ability on the International Parliamentary Convention to Commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Minister underscored the challenges faced by democracies the world around.

Tarar said, "The rise of hybrid democracies, populism, nationalism, depleting level of truth, and rising migration are the existing threats to democracies.

He added that intense polarization was another rising threat that would lead to economic inequality and democratic disconnect.

Tarar underlined that the deepening gulf between the political elite was also eroding democracy.

'Fascist PTI involved in destructive activities since 2014: Dastgir

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Engineer Khurram Dastgir Khan on Wednesday alleged that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was a fascist party which had been involved in destructive activities since 2014, targeting both public and private properties.

The party was more dangerous for Pakistan than its arch-rival India, he said while addressing a press conference.

Drawing historical parallels, Khurram Dastgir said, "Fascism, which had emerged in Italy and Germany a century ago, has now got its foothold in Pakistan under the leadership of Imran Khan, who had compromised the national interests by selling the disputed Kashmir territory in 2019."

It was not the "Tehreek-e-Insaf" (Movement for Justice) as it claimed itself to be, but a "Tehreek-e-Intishaar" (Movement for Chaos), with

a track record of sowing the seeds of disorder and anarchy in the country, he added.

The minister referred to many instances of violence perpetrated by the 'fascist party' over the years. He recalled in 2014 over 100 policemen were injured in a violent incident during the PTI's so-called sit-in in Islamabad, and its workers had also attacked the Pakistan Television (PTV) and the Parliament House.

In 2016, it resorted to blocking the Attock Bridge as a launching pad for attacks on the Federal Capital, he added.

The party, he said, continued its violent activities to date, destroying both private and public property, besides causing financial losses to the country. For the last one year it had kept the country unstable.

He said some 78 policemen had been injured in the violent protests since the lawful arrest of Imran

Khan. Moreover, an ambulance was torched in Peshawar, besides ransacking at the Army House in Lahore and the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

He said it was Imran Khan who was responsible for all the destruction occurred across the country as he had been continuously instigating his party workers over the year for indulging in violent activities, including attacking and setting ablaze public buildings. In fact, he had a political ideology centered on chaos and disruption, which he had imbued in his workers, he added.

He should be tried for treason charges as he had instigated rebellion among the institutions, he added.

The minister said Imran Khan had been arrested for corruption and corrupt practices. He had been issued over 10 notices by the National Accountability Bureau for answering its queries regarding corruption he allegedly committed in the name of Al-Qadir Trust.

NAB as an independent institution arrested Imran Khan: Shazia

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister and Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Shazia Marri on Wednesday said National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was an independent institution and arrested Imran Khan on charges of corruption.

Addressing a press conference here, she urged political workers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf to express sanity as Islamabad High Court had termed the arrest of Imran Niazi a legal action.

She said that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) did not believe in political victimiza-



tion.

In past, Shazia said, Imran Khan used NAB to arrest his opponents and almost all opposition members of Parliament had been jailed for several months on fake charges, only for political victimization.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

NA speaker terms Parliament as centre of power, sole legislative organ of state

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Parliament House was abuzz with delegates from more than 17 countries who have gathered for a two-day international constitutional convention aiming to celebrate the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Constitution of Pakistan here on Wednesday.

NA speaker terms Parliament as centre of power, sole legislative organ of state

The gathering has attracted speakers, deputy speakers, constitutionalists, and representatives from various walks of life also in the House.

In his opening address, National Assembly (NA) Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf highlighted the pivotal role of Parliament as the centre of



power and the sole legislative organ of the state.

He emphasized that the parliament represents the will of the people and, therefore, all state institutions are accountable to it.

The speaker, besides sharing insights into the struggles and efforts involved in the journey towards the 1973 Constitution, expressed disappointment

over the disruptions caused by multiple episodes of dictatorships, including the execution of the first democratically elected Prime Minister and architect of the Constitution, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

NA speaker terms Parliament as centre of power, sole legislative organ of state

Drawing attention to the significance of the 18th amendment, he noted that it restored the original spirit of the Constitution and ensured complete provincial autonomy envisioned by Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

However, he stressed the need to fully fulfill the promises outlined in Article 26, Article 3, Article 25, and Article 25-A of the Constitution, thereby eliminating gaps between promise and performance.

Quoting late leader Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the speaker reiterated that democracy is not a product but a continuous process.

He emphasized that democracy encompasses essential elements such as free and impartial media, women's participation, transparent elections, and an impartial judiciary. These building blocks of

democracy were promised in the 1973 Constitution, aiming to establish an ideal Islamic and federal parliamentary democracy.

NA speaker terms Parliament as centre of power, sole legislative organ of state

The international constitutional convention provides a platform for participants to exchange ideas, insights, and experiences related to constitutional governance. The event aims to reinforce the commitment to democracy, constitutionalism, and the rule of law. The convention includes discussions on various topics, including the role of parliament, constitutional rights, political processes, and the challenges and opportunities faced in upholding democratic principles.

ECC approves settlement agreement of Roosevelt Hotel

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Wednesday after a detailed discussion approved the execution of the settlement agreement of the Roosevelt Hotel, New York with the Hotel Union and the New York City Government.

The ECC met here with Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in chair discussed a summary submitted by the Ministry of Aviation on Challenges and re-opening of Roosevelt Hotel, New York, and briefed the meeting on the outcome of nego-

tiations held by the Committee with the New York City Government and the Hotel Union on reaching a suitable agreement for utilization of the Roosevelt Hotel (1,025 rooms) over a period of three years for Immigrant Housing Business by the New York City Government.

The ECC further gave nod for withdrawal of pending lawsuits by the Roosevelt Hotel with the Hotel Union and the City of New York pursuant to the terms of the settlement agreement with the Union.

The ECC further directed the PIAL to engage and share its business plan with the National Bank Pakistan



regarding the rollover of loans, said a press release.

The ECC also approved Technical Supplementary Grants/Supplementary Grants of Rs153 million in favour of the Ministry of Water Resources for payment of court cases fee for the settlement of the dispute with India

under the Indus Waters Treaty.

The Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs 4 billion (Equivalent to US\$ 20 million) as Rupee cover in favour of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training for the World Bank Program "Actions to

Strengthen Performance for inclusive and responsive education was also approved.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Power Khuram Dastgir Khan, Minister for Industries and Production Syed Murtaza Mahmud, Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman, Minister for Aviation/Railways Khawaja Saad Rafiq, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr Aisha Ghous Pasha.

Special Assistant to Prime Minister Finance Tariq Bajwa, SAPM on Revenue Tariq Mehmood Pasha, federal secretaries and other senior officers also attended the meeting.

Islamabad Bar announces judicial boycott after torture over lawyers

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Bar Association on Wednesday announced protest against violence on court officials and lawyers during Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan's arrest from Islamabad High Court.

According to the details, Secretary of Islamabad Bar Association, Rizwan Shabbir Kiani, has announced a judicial boycott and demanded an investigation into the incidents of violence and vandalism at the registry branch of the High Court during former prime minister and PTI chief Imran Khan's arrest.

Political hypocrites intended to trigger a civil war: ISPR

Amjad Mehmood

RAWALPINDI: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday termed May 9 as a "black chapter" mentioning the protests from hostile workers of a political party targeting to Pakistan Army's properties and installations which were triggered after PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest a day earlier from Islamabad High Court.

"We will not allow anyone to take the law into their hands," says the press statement issued by the ISPR. The statement includes that Imran Khan was arrested "in line with the NAB statement and law" and immediately after his arrest, the attacks were executed on the army's properties and installations. The protestors were also chanting anti-army slogans.

According to the ISPR, these scoundrels try to deceive the people by emphasizing the importance of the Pakistan Army while in parallel, they evoke the emotions of the common man to achieve their selfish objectives. "This is a classic example of hypocrisy," it was stated in media statement. ISPR further stated that by wearing a political cloak, this group has done what Pakistan's enemies could not dare in 75 years just in the lust for power.

The army demonstrated patience and restraint, as well as extreme tolerance, in the larger interest of the country, it was stated. A horrible attempt was made to force the army to deliver an early response so that it could be used for malicious political purposes with the help of this scenario that was manufactured under duplicitous design. This

scheme was foiled by the Army's responsible response. "We are quite aware that some evil party leadership was responsible for it through instructions, directions, and extensive planning", the statement continued.

According to the ISPR, the organizers, planners, and political activists involved in the protests had been identified and they would face heavy punishment as per the law. All such elements will now be responsible for the consequences, the ISPR added. Any more attacks on the army, including those on all law enforcement agencies, military sites, and state properties, will be harshly punished upon, with blame falling squarely on the group that has repeatedly stated its desire to plunge Pakistan into civil war. "No one can be permitted to provoke people

and let them take the law into their hands."

ISPR released this statement a day after when PTI Chairman Imran Khan was detained by the paramilitary troops from Islamabad High Court's biometric office in connection with a case involving the Al-Qadir Trust on Tuesday. The court granted eight days' remand of Imran Khan against a plea of 14 days from the National Accountability Bureau (NAB). Numerous protests continued in cantonment areas, General Headquarters (GHQ) Rawalpindi, and Frontier Crops offices after Imran's detention, sparking widespread unrest across the country. The suspension of internet services and social media by the government provided some ease however, the number of anti-military hashtags gained momentum on social media.

President emphasizes speedy justice to people in insurance matters



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday urged the Federal Insurance Ombudsman to ensure provision of speedy justice to the people in insurance-related matters.

The president said this as Federal Insurance Ombudsman Muhammad Khawar Jameel presented him annual report of 2022 highlighting the institution's performance.

The president also called for creating awareness on the role of Ombudsman for resolution of insurance-related complaints.

He also urged the people to approach the Ombudsman office for the resolution of their complaints concerning insurance.

According to the report, the Federal Insurance Ombudsman disposed off 4,634 complaints during 2022 providing relief worth Rs 2.5 billion to the policyholders.

It was told that around 95% of the said insurance cases were disposed of within 60 days.

As per report, the Ombudsman opened its new offices in Sukkur and Hyderabad to provide justice to the people at their doorstep.

No political motives behind Imran's arrest by NAB: Ahsan Iqbal

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday said that Imran Khan's arrest was made in a graft case by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and the government had nothing to do with it.

This is an arrest which is not motivated under any political victimization and not done at the behest of the government. It is the arrest made by the NAB, an independent institution that is supposed to look into the corruption cases committed in the country," the minister said while talking to foreign media here.

He clarified that the arrest was made under an arrest warrant duly examined by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) that declared the custody in line with the "proper legal procedures and lawful authority."

But unfortunately, Ahsan Iqbal said, the response that was given by the followers of Imran Khan brought great embarrassment for him and the party.



"The scenes that came on the media of loot and plunder are most deplorable because Mr Khan had been championing throughout his career that he stands for the rule of law. He (the PTI chairman) had been lecturing the people of Pakistan that what is the rule of law in the Western democracies."

The minister said the PTI workers showed examples of the worst fascist response that was ever witnessed in the country's history, adding "This is the worst kind of demagoguery and fascism that is being demonstrated by a leader whose rise to fame was sports."

SC fixes PTI's plea against Imran's arrest for hearing

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) on Wednesday fixed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) plea against the decision of IHC on the arrest of PTI Chief Imran Khan in Al-Qadir Trust corruption case for hearing.

SC registrar had earlier raised objections to the plea stating that Mr Khan could have approached the relevant forum, the IHC, for filing an intra-court appeal. "Mr Khan's documents are incomplete," he added.

The PTI had appealed in the Supreme Court against the Islamabad High Court (IHC) decision declaring the arrest of party chief Imran Khan lawful. The PTI submitted that the arrest of Imran Khan was illegal and sought his immediate release.

The IHC on Tuesday night declared the arrest of Imran Khan 'legal'. IHC Chief Justice Amir Farooq announced

the reserved verdict by accepting the point of view of the NAB. Earlier, it reserved verdict in the case whether the arrest, hours earlier, was illegal or had legal backing.

The CJ sprang into action soon after a team of Rangers took Imran Khan into custody on the premises of court where the PTI chief had come in two cases.

Earlier, a team of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB), with the help of Rangers, took Imran Khan into custody, prompting the IHC to take note. The NAB adopted a view that the notices sent to him and his arrest was 'completely in line with law and as per NAB ordinance.'

Imran's arrest warrant was signed by NAB Chairman retired Lt-Gen Nazir Ahmed. It said the PTI chief was accused of corruption and corrupt practices under Section 9(a) of the National Accountability Ordinance, 1999.

PTI Protests: Buses set on fire in Karachi, 2 arrested

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Angry protesters set Peoples Bus Service (PBS) buses on fire in Karachi as highly charged supporters of former Prime Minister Imran Khan blocked the Shahrah-e-Faisal to protest against his arrest.

Imran Khan's arrest from inside the premises of the Islamabad High Court on Tuesday triggered protests in many cities of the country by his party activists and supporters as they clashed with the police and destroyed

public properties.

The police fired tear shells and aerial firing to disperse supporters of Imran Khan on Shahrah-e-Faisal Karachi.

According to PBS management, four buses were damaged by supporters during protests. "The price of each bus is Rs80 million," the management said, adding that bus service would remain suspended in metropolises today.

In late night raid, Karachi police arrested two PTI activists who allegedly set Peoples Bus Service on fire.

Sheikh Rashid dejected over tense political situation

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Awami Muslim League (AML) chief Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said on Thursday he was depressed over worsening political situation in the country following the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan.

"It would be better to go to jail," the former interior minister lamented over the political turmoil that has spilled onto streets. Lashing out at the ruling coalition of 13 parties, he said their only agenda was to disqualify Mr Khan and put him in jail.

He said such tactics would not suppress the political status of the PTI chief but they were proving favourable for him. He said the government had shot itself in the foot



by taking such an action against the PTI chief. He said the ruling partners had

crippled the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in order to get their cases removed. Mr Ahmed said the

masses were fed up with the incompetent government as it was unable to deliver.

The AML chief said several people had lost their lives only in Lahore during confrontation between the PTI protesters and police. He said the PTI leaders, who were picked by Imran Khan for talks with the government, had been arrested on court premises. He said security was being provided to those who had looted the public money.

"Pakistan Army is a great institution and it cannot open fire on public," he said, adding that it was injustice to damage the military's departments.

"The basic reason for violence is that the protests are being led by the public itself," he said.

Karachi police arrest 250 individuals, including PTI workers



Bureau Report

KARACHI: In a crackdown against lawbreakers, Karachi police arrested 250 individuals, including a significant number of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers.

The police officials continue their efforts to identify lawbreakers by utilizing CCTV footage to identify individuals involved in vandalizing vehicles and tried to baffle law and order situation in the metropolis.

Meanwhile, the arrested individuals including PTI leaders and activists are booked under anti-terrorism charges.

The police officials are on high alert to maintain peace and stability in the city and take action against lawbreakers.

It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) asked people to save the country following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan.

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

"They have badly pushed injured Imran Khan. Pakistan's people, this is the time to save your country. You won't get any other opportunity," the tweet from PTI Twitter handle read.

Fawad Chaudhry shared the visuals of arrest of PTI chairman and he also asked masses to come out and defend the country.

Zero tolerance for violating the sanctity of Girls' schools

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.

PTI President among 72 booked under anti-terrorism act

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The Hazro Police on Wednesday registered a case against Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Attock chapter president Qazi Ahmed Akbar his 32 nominated and 40 unknown activists for making hostage Sub Divisional Police officer DSP Jehangir Joya and torturing ten other police officials during blocking GT road near Hattain in connection to protest against the arrest of party chief Imran Khan by Rangers personnel from the Islamabad Judicial Complex on Tuesday. The first investigation report (FIR) launched by station house officer Hazro Police station Muhammad Jameel under 11 different sections of Pakistan Penal Code (PPC) including section 7 of anti-terrorism act.

Meanwhile district Police officer (DPO) Dr Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan has paid visit to tehsil headquarters hospital Hazro to inquire the health of cops injured during the violent protest of PTI workers. He directed the health authorities to provide all available resources for better health cases to the injured cops. It may be mentioned here that ten cops and a local senior journalist Nisar Ali Khan was injured as the angry PTI protesters pelted stones over cops who reached at the spot to clear the traffic on GT road.

The problem

RAWALPINDI: Police personnel are closing the roads at Saddar Cant with heavy shipping containers due to former Prime Minister Imran Khan hearing.



Photo: Online

Shahid Afridi announces special food ration drive for supporting deprived families to prevent dropouts

News Desk

KARACHI: Global Celebrity, sports star and charity leader, Shahid Afridi, has announced the launching of a special food ration program for the destitute families of the students enrolled in the charitable schools supported by his non-profit in Sindh so that these children shouldn't be forced to leave the classroom to earn a living for their households.

Afridi, who is also Chairman of the Shahid Afridi Foundation (SAF), made the announcement to this effect as he spoke as the chief guest at the inauguration of the new block at First Floor of his combined charitable school in Wangi Goth in Karachi's suburbs. The school is jointly run by the non-profits Shahid Afridi Foundation SAF and Green Crescent Trust (GCT).

He also thanked GCT for properly maintaining the Wangi Goth School



and for its hard work to build spacious exterior and interior of the building of first floor and especially, classrooms with a very appealing environment in the new block. He said the bonding between the SAF and GCT continuing for the past five years had emerged as the best living example for other charities to work jointly to educate children

in the least developed parts of the country. He also thanked Anas Masood for attending the ceremony while informing the audience that Masood's late mother, Nikhat Masood, generously donated all the expenses required to build Wangi Goth School some nine years back.

In his message, read out on the occasion, GCT CEO Zahid Saeed, acknowledged the unwavering support provided by the SAF, especially by its Chairman and CEO for running charitable schools in the underprivileged parts of Sindh.

Zafar Malik, SAF CEO, said that only quality education would enable the children from the deprived communities to transform not just their own lives but that of their family members and enable them to come out of the vicious cycle of poverty. He said the SAF would further strengthen its partnership with the GCT to educate a greater number of children in Sindh whose parents couldn't afford quality schooling.

GCT Trustee, Saad Zia, expressed gratitude to the SAF, for supporting the construction of the new block at Wangi Goth School on its first floor enhancing its capacity to enroll a total of 500 students, from destitute families in the area, in up to Class 10th.

Violent protest never witnessed in country as done by PTI: Sharjeel Memon

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Information Minister, Sharjeel Inam Memon, on Wednesday, said that PTI Chairman Imran Khan was arrested in a corruption case registered under a proper course of law by the NAB and he has to plead it before the court.

Addressing a press conference he said that various political leaders have been arrested in Pakistan at different times, but such a violent protest had never been witnessed in the history of the country as done by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) the other day.

Instead of spreading violence and unrest and playing with people's lives, the PTI leadership should plead their case at the relevant legal forums, he said and warned that those who take the law into their hands and are found



involved in acts of arson, road blockage and damages to state property would be dealt with strictly according to the law.

PTI set the vehicles of water board on fire, burned the buses of People's Bus Service and destroyed the travel facility of thousands of citizens, he alleged and asked "What the citizens of Karachi did to you that you burnt their buses?"

Whatever PTI has done was unacceptable and it could only please the anti-national forces and hostile foreign media who were playing up those video clips, he stated.

He said that O and A levels examinations were postponed due to PTI's violent protest in Pakistan that was serious damage to students of the country.

He said that the Sindh Chief Minister on the occasion demonstrated his wisdom and clearly instructed that the road should be cleared but any kind of conflict should be avoided.

He said that peaceful protest was everyone's right and the government would also provide grounds and facilities for peaceful protest. But if someone violates the law the government will take strict legal action, he reiterated.

No democratic party has ever staged such a violent protest and even on

the heart-wrenching incident of the martyrdom of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, PPP leadership raised the slogan of "Pakistan Khapey".

Asif Ali Zardari had to spend 12 years in prison on false charges and was later acquitted of those fabricated cases by the courts, he said adding that Faryal Talpur, Agha Siraj Durrani, Khurshid Shah, Ijaz Jakhri and he himself were arrested in different baseless cases but PPP never came in confrontation with state institutions.

Sharjeel Memon said that Imran Khan had targeted his political opponents and today he himself was behind bars due to the corruption he had committed.

The minister asked the citizens to open their shops and businesses and assured that the government would provide complete protection to them.

11 PTI leaders hid in my house to avoid arrests, claims Faisal Vawda



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former senator Faisal Vawda claimed that 11 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader hid in his house to avoid arrest following the arrest of PTI chairman Imran Khan.

Addressing a news conference, the former senator Faisal Vawda said that the rumors are being spread intentionally regarding life threats to PTI chairman Imran Khan.

He maintained that the enemies are benefiting from the situation and using this violence as an opportunity to increase the unrest, so people should avoid any steps that can create problems for Imran Khan.

Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers took to the streets in

large numbers after which some of the protesters set an ambulance on fire.

The situation quickly escalated as protesters closed down Khyber Road, leading to massive traffic jams and causing inconvenience to commuters. Meanwhile, some protesters set an ambulance on fire.

The police responded with force, shelling the protesters to disperse the crowd. In the aftermath of the protests and arrested a total of 30 individuals from various locations in connection with the protests.

It is pertinent to mention here that the police are currently using CCTV footage to identify and prosecute any individuals who were involved in creating disturbances and lawlessness during the protests.



Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3: 36 am
Zohr 12: 04 pm
Asr 4: 58 pm
Maghrib 6: 58 pm
Isha 8: 33 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
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CAA 9281092

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MH 561116
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DHQ 5556311-4
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Shifa International 4603666

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TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
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Corporation 9209224
Potohar Town 9209224

Democracy cannot function without devolution of powers at grassroots level: Speakers

ISLAMABAD: The speakers at the Breakout Session of the two-day international constitutional convention aiming to commemorate the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Constitution of Pakistan on Wednesday said the democracy could not function without devolution of powers at the grassroots level.

Chairing the session on 'Federalism and Devolution of Powers: Challenges and Opportunities', Pakistan Peoples Party's Dr Nafisa Shah explained that federalism, a state-building governance, was a fascinating model offering wide-ranging solutions to addressing diversities and differences in a political system.

She quoted the Magistrate of History Lord Acton as saying that "Federalism is the best curb on democracy. It assigns limited powers to the central government. Thereby all power is limited. It excludes absolute power of the majority."

Nafisa Shah ironically said "The frequent military rule in Pakistan helped strengthen the federal system in the country as every time, the military rule suspends the Constitution and sub-national movements got concurrency for further reinforcing the demand for a federal constitution to protect the rights of smaller provinces."

PTI's miscreants launched major attack on building of Radio Pakistan Peshawar: DG

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Director General (DG) of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) Tahir Hassan on Wednesday said that miscreants of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have launched a major attack on the building of Radio Pakistan Peshawar.

Hundreds of miscreants stormed into the building of Radio Pakistan and broke the main gate of the building, he said in a message issued by his office.

"The miscreants ransacked in the News Room and other sections of the station," he added.

Tahir Hassan said the miscreants had also attacked the building of Radio Pakistan Peshawar last night and again launched an attack today and perpetrated violence against the staff including women. They set on fire the official record and equipment.



The DG Radio Pakistan said the miscreants also set on fire the parked vehicles inside the station and looted the official equipment including cameras and mics.

Meanwhile, Station Director Radio Pakistan Peshawar Ijaz Khan said that the situation of the Radio Pakistan Peshawar was quite tensed.

In an interview with Radio Pakistan News and Current Affairs channel today, he said some two hundred protestors barged into the building of Radio Pakistan at 10: 00 am today, while breaking

the main gate.

They destroyed and ransacked in the reception of the station and thrashed windowpanes. They also entered the main studios where they destroyed the entire equipment.

"We repeatedly requested them not to destroy the state broadcaster, but all in vain," he added.

The Station Director said demonstrators again entered the building at nearly 12: 00 at noon and ransacked inside the main building and destroyed equipment including computers and other official record.

They also set ablaze main building and vehicles including three official vehicles parked inside the station besides motorcycles.

He said the sole objective of the demonstrators was loot and plunder and even they hurled life threats to the staff members.

Safety

ISLAMABAD: Workers of local administration are placing the shipping containers to block the D-Chowk, to counter any unexpected situation in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Fawad Chaudhry arrested

City Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) vice chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi was taken into custody by police in Islamabad.

As per details, Shah Mehmood Qureshi was arrested from Gilgit Baltistan House in Islamabad, soon after the riots erupted across Pakistan following the arrest of former prime minister Imran Khan in Al-Qadir Trust case.

Qureshi's arrest was an addition to the tally as several PTI leaders including former Governor Punjab Omer Sarfraz Cheema, PTI secretary general Asad Umar and PTI Vice President Fawad Chaudhry were already apprehended by police.

Earlier, it was reported that PTI vice-chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi was arrested as the authorities crack down on the party's leadership amid countrywide protests.

Later, Shah Mehmood Qureshi rebutted reports of his arrest, saying that such information was being spread to create chaos.

In a statement, the former foreign minister said that a strategy of 'spreading false information, chaos and terror' had been adopted, warning the government of a 'big mistake'.

Meanwhile: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice President Fawad Chaudhry has been arrested by police officials from outside the Supreme Court (SC) under 16 MPO.

Fawad Chaudhry was present in the Supreme Court's building since 12: 00 noon to avoid his arrest. He was immediately arrested by police after he stepped out of the SC premises late Wednesday night.

While conducting a press conference, Fawad Chaudhry said it would be the first time in history that a lawyer is being arrested. "Politics have divided the legal fraternity and all sections in Pakistan are facing the same challenge."

He criticised that PTI chief was arrested from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) when he reached the court for securing bail.

The PTI vice president urged to adopt such steps which brings the situation under control. He slammed the

government by saying that all tactics are being used to silence political opponents.

"When I was present in the SC building, the security staff turned off the lights and asked me to surrender."

"I filed a petition at the IHC yesterday which was reviewed by the high court's chief justice and asked the authorities to refrain from arresting me till May 12. Police officials have arrived here to arrest me despite the court orders."

Fawad said that some elements are trying to create misunderstandings between the PTI and the armed forces.

After the press conference, Fawad Chaudhry has been arrested by the police under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Section 16.

Law minister chairs meeting regarding training of customs investigation officers

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar has chaired a meeting regarding the training of customs investigation officers.

Officials of Law and Prosecution department, Customs and senior members of the Bar Advocate Syed Zulfiqar Abbas Naqvi, Advocate Qamar Sabzwari, Advocate Asim Shafi and Advocate Abdul Rehman Bajwa were also present in the meeting, said a press release.

The committee after thorough discussions decided to design a training programme for customs investigation officers in consultation with Islamabad Bar Council Legal Education Committee.

Moreover, the first batch of Customs IOs would be called for training from Monday coming week.

Lastly, a handy guide for investigators and prosecutors would also be prepared preferably within 30 days.



City main roads open for vehicular traffic: CTP



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: All main city roads are open for vehicular traffic, said a City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi here on Wednesday.

He informed that the traffic situation was normal on all main city roads at 11.45 am as CTP had finalized arrangements utilizing all available resources to regulate traffic.

All Traffic Police officers were in the field and supervising all the arrangements, he informed.

Additional traffic wardens had been deployed at all important points to control traffic, said City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Taimoor Khan. All the officials were performing their duties efficiently and committed to regulating traffic, he added. Special arrangements had been made for alternative routes in case of traffic diversion, Taimoor Khan said.

Information about traffic load and the latest traffic situation was being provided to the citizens on FM 88.6 and official social media pages, CTO added.

The spokesman said that the citizens were advised to travel with 20 to 25 minutes extra time to reach at their destination to avoid any problem.

NUST, HEC ink DoU to undertake Prime Minister's National Innovation Award

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan have signed a Document of Understanding (DoU) to undertake the Prime Minister's National Innovation Award, an initiative under the Prime Minister's Youth Program. Executive Director of HEC Dr Shaista Sohail and NUST Pro-Rector Research, Innovation & Commercialisation, Dr Rizwan Riaz signed the partnership agreement at the main campus of NUST. Chairman HEC Dr Mukhtar Ahmed and Rector NUST Lt Gen (Retd) Engr Javed Mahmood Bukhari attended the event.

The Prime Minister's National Innovation Award is a pioneering initiative launched by the PM Youth Affairs to support early-stage startups in emerging fields in Pakistan. It is the country's first public-funded, equity-free seed grant programme, aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship among the youth.

The project aims to identify and nurture 100 brilliant ideas through financial support, mentorship, and a focused, hands-on startup bootcamp. Experienced professionals will help refine the ideas; and promising startups will have access to various incubation centres across Pakistan for further development.

This flagship project is a significant step towards promoting socio-economic development in the country by creating new business ventures and job opportunities for young people. By encouraging and supporting entrepreneurship, the Prime Minister's National Innovation Award aims to unleash the potential of the country's youth and drive innovation in Pakistan.

The collaboration between the executing agency (HEC) and the partner agency (NUST) will consist of several key collaborative activities. These activities are Business Proposal Writing & Pitching Bootcamp Pitching Competition, Award Ceremonies and Investor-Connect event.

Workers' remittances down 13pc in July-April FY23

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The overseas workers' remittances posted a decline of 13 percent during first ten months of fiscal year 2022-23 as the remittances fell from \$26.143 billion in July-April of FY22 to \$22.741 billion in the period under review.

On a year-on-year basis, the overseas workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.210 billion in April 2023, posting a decrease of 29.25 percent as compared with the same month of the previous year's inflow of \$3.124 billion, according to the latest data released by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Wednesday. On a month-on-month basis, the overseas workers' remittances also decreased by 12.85 percent from \$2.536 billion in March 2023 to \$2.210.6 billion in April 2023.

According to the remittances' inflows during April 2023 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$489.3 million), the United Arab Emirates (\$382.1 million), the United Kingdom (\$360.7 million) and the United States of America (\$275.8 million).

During the corresponding month, the overseas Pakistanis living in Bahrain sent \$34.3 million, from Kuwait \$62.2 million, from Qatar \$67.1 million whereas \$85.8 million were dispatched from Oman.

Similarly, the inflows from Germany, France, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, Greece, Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, and Belgium were recorded at \$44.5 million, \$38.4 million, \$4.8 million, \$41.2 million, \$69.2 million, \$29.5 million, \$5.9 million, \$6.4 million, \$9.1 million and \$8.3 million respectively.

Likewise, from Malaysia, Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, and Japan, the workers dispatched \$8.6 million, \$8.1 million, \$4.1 million, \$44.5 million, \$48.2 million, and \$5.1 million respectively.

Conference on Transition of Traditional Universities to Online Mode Commences at IIUI

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: International conference on "transition of traditional universities to online mode" organized by Faculty of Education of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) commenced here at the Faisal Masjid Campus on Wednesday, May 10th.

The conference is being organized by Faculty of Education in collaboration with Iqbal International Institute of Research & Dialogue, Higher Education Commission & Pakistan Science Foundation.

In the conference participants addressed the emerging issues and challenges in the distance education and e-learning.

Renowned national and international academicians and researchers expressed views on the ultimate



possibilities and guidelines for the maximum role of distance education and e-learning in the national development.

In this two day conference more than 300 researchers, keynote speakers, educationists, experts are participating and it will witness

around 70 papers from the presenters hailing from Austria, USA, Lebanon and Pakistan who will participate in conference physically and through online mode.

Addressing the conference, Acting President, Dr. Nabi Bux Jumani said the distance and open learning is one

of the leading modes of education across the world and recent episode of pandemic has identified the need and utilization of online educational and learning globally.

Dean Faculty of education, Dr. Muhammad Sarwar said that transition of the traditional universities to online mode is helpful in addressing the issues of education being faced by developing countries.

Director General Quality Assurance Directorate, Nasir Shah said that HEC is working on ODL policy that has been prepared in consultation with the academia of Pakistan.

Dr. Fouzia Ajmal, being the focal person apprised of the themes and details of the conference.

She told that more than 30 universities are participating in this conference through participants and speakers..

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Freedom of expression, national interests and targeting Pak Army

The love of religion is obligatory for every Muslim. There are many matters in the religion such as monotheism and faith in the prophet-hood, which must be accepted without thinking and discussion, and the slightest doubt can cause one to leave the religion. After love for religion comes the turn of love for country and in Islam love for country has also been given a special status. Along with love for country, observance of the country's constitution and laws is also mandatory for every citizen and it is a part of any society.

The armed forces are responsible for protecting the ideological borders of the country. Pakistan Army is one of the best forces in the world. Due to the patriotism, professionalism and endless sacrifices of our brave sons and daughters, no one can dare to see towards our beloved country with bad intentions. The brave soldiers who sacrifice their sleep for our comfort and peace are undoubtedly our proud. The soldiers of our army, navy and air forces who fearlessly protect our longest and most difficult ideological borders are on our foreheads. Our military intelligence agency is also one of the best agencies in the world and it is an eyesore to our enemies.

Apart from protecting our external and ideological borders, the Pakistan Army has rendered valuable services on the internal fronts as well. Nation is thankful for the valuable efforts and sacrifices of the Pakistan Army due to which terrorism and extremism are being eradicated and the situation is rapidly improving. Pakistan Army has always been at the forefront in dealing with natural calamities and helping the victims. The valuable services of Pakistan Army in health, education, city building and other sectors cannot be

denied. They are successfully taking care of the security of our national assets, peace and law & order. Census and elections etc. are impossible without the participation and selfless help of Pakistan Army. Without a little doubt, Pakistan Army is the only ray of hope in the beloved country which is in the grip of corruption and terrorism. If you look at developed and strong countries, you will come to know that their forces get oxygen from their people. The people and rulers of those countries give full moral support to their respective forces. If everyone is weighed in the scales of patriotism, the weight of the army would be heavy.

It is our irony that religion, Country and armed forces are targeted in the name of freedom of expression and every now and then such incidents keep cropping up in the media. It is surprising that the so-called intellectuals who remain silent on the people's common issues keep turning their guns towards the religion, the country and the armed forces.

Many in Pakistan believe that complete freedom of the expression is admissible under International law. Spreading hatred for state institutions among the public and giving out statements against the military, judges and the police is legal under the umbrella of 'democracy' and 'freedom of expression'. Unfortunately, many in Pakistan do not know this. Under international law, utterances may be legally controlled if they cause serious harm to national security, and many governments can limit any public debate on national security matters. International law draws a line, and the provisions

in international law allow the exercise of the right to freedom of expression to be limited on the grounds of national security, provided that this is explicitly provided by law and that the restriction is necessary and proportional in an open and democratic society. National security is one of the most crucial areas where interference with media freedom is in practice. Every person, irrespective of race, caste or gender, has the right to freedom of speech and expression. Freedom of speech and expression incorporates freedom to hold conclusions and to get and confer information and ideas without obstruction by the public authority or the state. However, we should not confuse freedom of expression with harming national security and battering the institutions of a state but should, instead, find a balance between both.

Another alarming issue is lack of tolerance, ethics and values from our political parties and leaders. Recently baseless and false allegations have been seen from PTI Chairman and leaders Against Army and Intelligence agencies. These allegations have been raised without showing proofs and situation of anarchy and hate has been created in the country. Imran Khan has boosted the feelings of his supporters at such a level that they have started attacks on Pak Army, intelligence agencies and our national assets. In an appalling incident of vandalism witnessed before in country's political history, the historic corps commander's house in Lahore which also served as residence of the founding father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was attacked by PTI support-

ers on Tuesday hours after Imran Khan's arrest by the Rangers personnel in Islamabad. The violent protesters entered the corps commander's residence, also known as Jinnah House, ransacked the building, destroyed the furniture, damaged other fixtures and later set it on fire. Columns of smoke rising from the building could be seen from a distance. Luckily, neither the corps commander nor any member of his family were present when the incident took place. In another tragic incident, dozens of supporters of PTI equipped with batons, rods and bricks attacked GHQ and broke out the main gate from Saddar side. A large number of enraged workers of PTI also pelted the gate of GHQ from RA Bazaar side with stones and bricks. In several cities of Pakistan, the PTI workers blocked the roads, causing difficulty for the citizens. They are attacking on national assets. Their actions are backed up by their leadership and PTI workers have been allegedly emotionalized by Imran Khan. Of course, the chaos have been incited on the signals of PTI leadership. These things should not be acceptable in the country. I mean if someone have been arrested through a legal procedure then if he is a citizen of the country and claims to make Riasat e Madina where everyone will have equal rights, then at least he should face legal proceedings like an ordinary person. If you are against status quo and protocol then why you need special treatment.

Readers, it is need of the time that strict actions should be taken to draw a clear line between Freedom of expression and malicious attacks on our religion and institutions. Speeches and actions against Country, Pak Army, Intelligence agencies and national & public assets are not acceptable and should be treated with iron hands.

Former Pakistani PM Imran Khan arrested

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has been arrested as he appeared in a court in the capital, Islamabad, to face corruption allegations, sparking protests across the country.

The arrest on Tuesday is the latest twist in a months-long political crisis and follows several unsuccessful attempts to apprehend the cricketer-turned-politician, including a police raid in March at his residence in the eastern city of Lahore which he had managed to evade.

As news broke out, PTI supporters took to the streets of several cities demanding the release of the party leader, chanting slogans such as "Khan is out red line."

Video footage shared on social media showed angry crowds inside the private residence of the corps commander of Lahore, the capital of eastern province of Punjab and the city where Khan resides. Internet monitoring group Netblocks said later on Tuesday access to Twitter, Facebook and YouTube had been restricted.

Security personnel escort a car carrying Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan as he arrives at the high court in Islamabad

Akbar Nasir Khan, a top police official in Islamabad, told Al Jazeera that Khan was arrested in a case related to the Al-Qadir University Trust. The anti-corruption National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had issued an arrest warrant against Khan on May 1 in relation to the case, he said.

The accountability body issued a statement saying Khan had been arrested "for the crime of corruption".

"The former prime minister has not given any adequate response to the summoning notices of NAB. His arrest has been made in accordance with the NAB ordinance and the law," the statement read. Since his removal from power last year, Khan has been slapped with dozens of charges, all of which he has denied and said were politically motivated.

Imran Khan's lawyer accused the Rangers of hitting Khan on his head and kicking him before taking him away.

"Rangers forcibly entered and broke the door and window [of the room]. They picked up Imran Khan from his wheelchair, hit him on his head and kicked him," Gohar Ali Khan, who was accompanying the former prime minister at the Islamabad High Court, said in a video posted on the PTI's social media account.

"I fell during the commotion. Rangers pepper sprayed him and took him away," the lawyer added.

Ali Khan said no police officials were present inside the room where Khan was arrested.

Fawad Chaudhry, a PTI leader, tweeted that the Islamabad High Court complex was "occupied" by the Rangers and lawyers were "being subjected to torture".

Video footage on local media showed Khan being escorted to a Rangers vehicle and taken to the NAB's office in Rawalpindi, a town adjoining Islamabad.

Rangers abducted PTI Chairman Imran Khan, these are the visuals. Pakistan's brave people must come out and defend their country. pic.twitter.com/hjwG42hsE4

PTI officials called on supporters to take to the streets following Khan's arrest, which they termed an abduction.

"Pakistan's brave people must come out and defend their country," the party posted on Twitter.

Police, however, warned that an order banning gatherings of more than four people would be strictly enforced.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi



Amjad Rasmi

Uncollected waste exposing Lahorites to health hazards

Dr. Saeed Ahmad Ali

Uncollected waste and poor disposal mechanism is exposing millions of Lahorites to serious health hazards as Lahore Waste Management Company seemingly falling a bit short of ensuring metropolitan's cleanliness.

With Lahore, the second largest city in the country generating more than 7690 tons of solid waste daily, citizens at different localities are seen complaining of uncollected waste lying at streets and roadsides.

Despite action by the LWMC, it has also been observed that a chunk of waste is either dumped in vacant plots or burnt in open emitting hazardous smoke irking the residents of those areas.

Mohsin Raza, a student at Anarkali hostel complained that improper cleanliness at food-street was emitting stinking smell and breeding mosquitoes in the area.

"We can't sleep at night due to the smell and mosquitoes biting. As we can't afford air-conditioner in our rooms and have to sleep by keeping windows open, therefore, fouling smell and mosquitoes biting have become a nuisance for us," he said.

He pointed out that a visit to the area especially the streets could make officers of the company realize the actual situation. "Moreover, it is not this particular area but some other parts of the city are also a victim to cleanliness and hygiene issues."

The situation is not alike everywhere as in some areas, the LWMC workers are seen waste collecting and its vehicles disposing of this waste at proper dumping sites.

But, in a metropolitan spreading over miles where there are funds and infrastruc-

ture constraints, one cannot expect an ideal situation.

Muhammad Akhtar, a resident of Ichhra locality has informed that although in some areas generally, waste collection workers collect waste in the morning yet there is no arrangement or mechanism for waste collection in the evening.

"Therefore, we need a comprehensive strategy to keep the city clean," he said as a number of other residents in Shadbagh, China Scheme, Misri Shah, Salamatpura, Daroghahwal, Sabzazar, and Sabzi Mandi areas supplemented his opinion.

Residents of these areas have also complained of respiratory and skin diseases due to improper hygiene and cleanliness situations demanding more efforts for ensuring clean and healthy living.

Pakistan generates approximately 49.6 million tons of solid waste per year, increasing more than 2.4 percent annually. But, like other developing countries, our country also lacks an overall waste management infrastructure, creating serious environmental and health problems.

There are also challenges like inadequate waste management equipment, lack of urban planning and awareness among residents.

Mehmood Khalid Qamar, a noted environmentalist has commented that besides other environmental challenges, proper waste disposal was emerging as a gigantic task with every passing day.

"Due to rising population and rapid urbanization, ensuring proper waste disposal as well as cleaner and healthy environment has become an uphill task," he said. "If we did not rise to the occasion, the coming years see more ailing people as well as mounting health bills."

He said a selected spot for piling garbage near Lakh Deher and Karol Ghathi is also

causing a nuisance for the residents, making the surrounding area unhealthy and foul-smelling.

"When these heaps of rubbish would continue to grow within and in the city's outskirts, environmental situation and air quality would continue to deteriorate," he added. "If we dream cleaner cities for tomorrow, we need to tighten our belts today."

Meanwhile, the LWMC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Babar Sahib Din has contested the residents' and experts' claims stating that the body was making all possible efforts to ensure cleanliness in the city.

"The government is investing more than Rs1.25 billion to improve solid waste cleanliness mechanisms in the city," Sahib Din said. "Besides waste collection and cleanliness in different areas of the city, the company also runs awareness campaigns to educate citizens about the importance of cleanliness."

He informed that LWMC enforcement teams have conducted special operations in different areas penalizing 466 irresponsible citizens and shopkeepers imposing Rs 1.5 million in fines during the last 15 days of April.

"During this period, the enforcement teams completed inspections of more than 5,500 places and 11 illegal dumping vehicles were seized on-the-spot registering 12 FIRs," he informed. "Fine was also imposed for violation of the Local Government Act and more than 752 warning notices were issued on violations."

Sahib Din said the management was pursuing a zero-tolerance policy against illegal dumping of garbage on streets and roadsides and strict action is taken against violators.

He said the LWMC also conduct workshops and awareness sessions in collaboration with trade unions, schools, colleges and associations to educate people about their responsibility to keep the city clean.

City managers tighten belts to overcome water shortage in capital

Shahid Mahmood

With Federal Capital's population rising over two million from around 800,000 in 2008, the city managers are continuously under stress to meet the basic amenities needs of the residents.

Besides cleanliness, waste disposal, pollution control and maintaining law and order, the provision of sufficient water to households has become a gigantic task as a shortfall in routine supply by the Capital Development Authority is forcing residents to purchase water from private operators.

As the population grew to 150 percent during the last 15 years, the available water resources are falling short of meeting the daily needs of the residents, especially during the summer season.

Furthermore, rapid urbanization and illegal settlements in catchment areas have caused damage to the natural ecosystem, leading to soil erosion and reduced water storage capacity.

"We are cognizant of the situation and have recently recommended changes in existing by-laws proposing the construction of recharge wells for rain-water harvesting to replenish the city's groundwater resource," stated Deputy Director General Water (CDA) Sardar Khan Zimri.

He said the suggested amendments would make it mandatory for all homeowners to construct recharge wells alongside already constructed water tanks. "The recharge wells would help to ensure water storage as well as a recharge water table, which would help reduce the depletion rate."

Zimri said, currently Islamabad's water requirement was 220 million gallons per day (mgd) against the CDA's daily supply of only 70mgd and this demand was set to increase further due to the rapidly growing population.

He also mentioned initiatives like the construction of new dams, upgrading water supply infrastructure and promoting water conservation practices

to address the issue.

However, seeing the ground realities it is obvious that solely depending on rainwater harvesting or constructing recharge wells is not enough as there is a dire need to change the water usage habits of people.

If those consuming water rampantly are charged at the same rate as those using less water, the wastage cannot be controlled. There are thousands of residents of small government quarters and houses who are provided water through rationing.

But, contrary to this, there are hundreds of others who enjoy uninterrupted supply or are immediately provided water tankers by putting them on the VIP list. This discriminatory approach is also needed to be shunned to facilitate consumers across the board.

According to an official and renowned water expert, when Islamabad was built, the groundwater was just 50 feet low which has now downed to 500 to 600 feet. "There was a time when we could find water just after 50 feet down. But, now people have to dig down to 400 to 500 feet to find water."

This water shortage issue, he said gave birth to the rapid growth of tanker mafia who were exploiting the needy people by charging for water as per their will.

"The water tanker that was being provided for Rs 600 to 700 a few years, was now being charged over Rs 2000 and even more. If this mafia is growing in glove in hand with CDA officials then strict punitive measures should be taken against both," he emphasized.

He underlined the need for moving forward on war footing to address the water shortage issue before it becomes a nuisance for both the consumers and the city managers.

Making many wait for hours for water supply and providing others ample water for floor cleaning, floor and car washing, gardening is in no way justified.

Therefore, urgent action is required by implementing effective water management strategies, raising awareness, introducing water metering and improving water supply infrastructure to ensure equitable access of the residents to this resource.

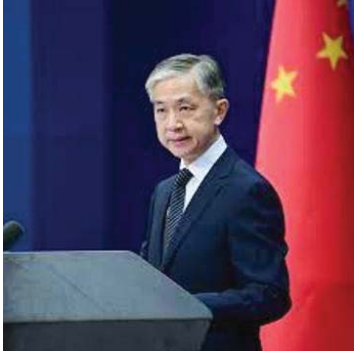
Afghanistan should not be excluded from international community: China

Spokesman Report

BELJING: Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson said on Wednesday that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community and the Afghan people's well-being should receive due attention.

"As a traditional friendly neighbor of Afghanistan, we always believe that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community. Afghan people's well-being should receive due attention," Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing when asked whether China believes that it would help Afghan side gain international recognition if the Afghan side truly delivers on pledge to fight terrorism.

The spokesperson said that Afghanistan's reconstruction process should



be encouraged, and its sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected.

"We also note the world's concerns and expectations for the interim government, including with regard to adopting prudent and moderate policies protecting women and chil-

dren's rights and interests and taking a firmer stance on counter-terrorism," he added.

Referring to the joint statement issued at the end of fifth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue held in Islamabad, he said it reflected the consensus reached and trust for deeper cooperation in political development and security domains.

"As you said, this is the first multilateral document that has the participation of the Afghan interim government. And it is also the first time that the Afghan Taliban made an explicit written pledge denouncing terrorism especially the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)," he added.

He pointed out that the fifth dialogue was the first formal dialogue

among the foreign ministers of the three countries since the profound change in the situation in Afghanistan in 2021.

"The dialogue plays an important role in advancing good neighborly friendship and practical cooperation among the three countries and contributes to the political settlement of the Afghan issue and galvanize international efforts for stability and development in Afghanistan," he added.

The Chinese side hoped that Afghan interim government would take concrete steps in the right direction to gain the understanding and trust of the international community and create enabling conditions for the country to grow friendly ties with its neighbors and become a member of the international community.

Durrani, Aliyev discuss enhancing business, trade



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of Azerbaijan's Milli Majlis, Adil Aliyev called on National Assembly Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani and discussed the importance of parliamentary relations in enhancing business and trade opportunities between the two countries.

During a meeting, Aliyev also suggested using deep-sea routes to benefit Azerbaijan's international trade. Durrani praised the Azerbaijani Ambassador and offered e-visas to Azerbaijani traders and businessmen.

The ambassador while extending his gratitude, said Azerbaijan always intended to promote trade relations between nations.

He stressed the need to play a pivotal role as a Parliamentarian to bring both countries' people closer. He also informed that traders and businessmen are keen to invest in Pakistan and he is looking forward to an easy process of business.

He also said that the Azerbaijan people love the people of Pakistan from the core of their hearts as Pakistani people always supported Azerbaijan.

Deputy Speaker Zahid Akram Durrani invited Adil Aliyev to visit scenic beauties in Pakistan which he warmly accepted.

Chinese Company ensures safe drinking water for Islamabad students

News Desk

BELJING: Chinese Environmental Technology Company, Zhongke Runlan Environmental Technology (Beijing) Co., Ltd., in collaboration with international organizations, has donated reverse osmosis (RO) water treatment equipment to Islamabad Model College for Girls.

Last month, a team of engineers from the company arrived in Pakistan to provide technical guidance and install the equipment at the school, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday.

According to Runlan, under the framework of China's "Belt and Road" initiative and in line with the principles of green development, Chinese companies are actively contributing to global sustainable development by sharing China's clean energy equipment, technology, and services with the world.



Upon their arrival in Pakistan, the team of technicians promptly ventured to the site to carry out water sample testing. Startling results emerged from their assessments: "After our testing, we found that the electrical conductivity of the water sample reached 2330 μ s/cm, indicating a high concentration of harmful ion impurities far exceeding international standards," stated a representative from Runlan Environmental Technology. Pakistan is one of the

countries facing water pollution issues, particularly when it comes to drinking water. In certain regions, due to adverse natural conditions and improper utilization of water resources, the groundwater contains a high concentration of harmful substances, rendering it unsuitable for consumption. This directly poses a threat to the drinking water safety of local residents. Islamabad Model College for Girls, located in the rural area of Tarnol, is one such school

grappling with this issue. The school lacks proper water filtration equipment, forcing some children to bring their own drinking water from home every day. Unfortunately, not all children have access to clean water facilities at home.

The team started their interaction with the school staff by explaining the basic theoretical knowledge about the RO reverse osmosis water treatment equipment. They then proceeded to demonstrate the specific wiring steps and testing procedures to the school. After undergoing treatment with the RO reverse osmosis water purification equipment, the electrical conductivity of the water samples decreased to 421 $\frac{1}{2}$ μ s/cm, meeting international standards.

"We are delighted to see children are now drinking safe and reliable water, this matters the most," a representative from Zhongke Runlan expressed.

Finland's youngest PM announces divorcing her husband



Sanna Marin, Finland's outgoing prime minister, has announced divorcing her husband after 19 years together, it emerged on Wednesday.

Her husband, Markus Raikkonen, also announced on Instagram that they both had filed for divorce.

"We are grateful for the 19 years together and our beloved daughter. We will remain best friends," they said in separate Instagram stories.

"We're still best friends, close to each other and loving parents. Going forward we will still spend time together as a family and with each other. We wish you will respect our privacy. We won't comment further on this," Marin wrote on Instagram.

Marin and Raikkonen, who married in 2020, share a 5-year-old daughter. They tied the knot in 2020 when Marin as prime minister was dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We have lived our youth together, entered adulthood together and grown into parents for our dear daughter together," Marin wrote on Instagram after her August 2020 wedding to Raikkonen.

Iraqi Kurds keep nervous eye on Turkish election race

News Desk

ARBIL, IRAQ: As Turkey's presidential vote nears, Iraqi Kurds are keeping a close watch on the tightest electoral battle yet for Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the outcome of which could have major security and economic implications for their region.

For many years, fighting between Turkey's armed forces and Kurdish militants has spilled over into Iraq's autonomous Kurdish north, a rugged mountain region where both sides operate military bases.

Many Kurds in war-scarred Iraq sympathise with the ethnic minority in Turkey, but their own region also relies on the big neighbour for busi-



ness, with its crucial oil long exported via a pipeline that runs through Turkey.

Political leaders in Arbil

are not officially commenting on Turkey's tight electoral race between Erdogan and his challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who has pledged to "bring democracy to this country by changing the one-man regime".

But, whatever the outcome of the Turkish presidential vote, with the first round to be held Sunday, Iraq's Kurdish region will look to preserve its strategic partnership with Ankara, analysts say.

"The media, the political scene, everyone is highly preoccupied with the Turkish elections," said Adel Bakawan, director of the French Centre for Research on Iraq, who stressed that Ankara's role in the region is "fundamental".

Iraq's Kurdish leaders have built relationships with Erdogan, he said, adding that, if "the president changes, the whole relationship between Arbil and Ankara changes... The diplomatic world hates the unknown."

UN chief condemns civilian deaths in Gaza, urges restraint by all

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned civilian deaths in Gaza as "unacceptable" and appealed for them to "stop immediately" and for all parties to exercise maximum restraint, Deputy U.N. spokesperson Farhan Haq said on Wednesday.

Israel hit Islamic Jihad targets in Gaza for a second day on Wednesday and Palestinian militants launched hundreds of rockets across the border, setting off sirens as far away as Tel Aviv, while Egypt began efforts to mediate an end to the fighting.

The 15-member U.N. Security Council met behind closed-doors on Wednesday over the latest violence. In total 20 Palestinians, including at least five women and five children, as well as three senior Islamic Jihad commanders and four gunmen have been killed since Israel launched pre-dawn strikes on Tuesday, Palestinian health officials said.

"Israel must abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law, including the proportional use of force and taking all feasible precautions to spare civilians and civilian objects in the conduct of military operations," Haq said.

Guterres also condemns the indiscriminate launching of rockets from Gaza into Israel, which violates international humanitarian law and puts at risk Palestinian and Israeli civilians, Haq said. "The Secretary-General urges all parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint and to work to stop hostilities immediately," Haq said in a statement.

Saudi Arabia launches business incubator, accelerator programs to support SMEs

Spokesman Report

RIYADH: Entrepreneurs in Saudi Arabia are set to receive a boost from the new Industrial Business Accelerator and Incubator Initiative launched by the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources.

The new drive aims to meet the specific needs of small and medium enterprises and industrial project owners in the Kingdom, according to a statement.

Incubators primarily concentrate on entrepreneurs in the early stages, according to the official spokesman of the Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources Jarrah bin Muhammad Al-Jarrah.

They tend to sponsor businesses, from those at the stage of generating ideas to emerging companies, while helping them to establish and further accelerate in terms of future growth and success, the spokesman added.

On the other hand, accelerators mainly focus on late-stage startups which have high growth potential.

They pose as short-term programs that offer business consulting, training, mentorship, as well as optional financial support while aiming at further expanding their scope.

The new initiative will benefit from the experience and joint resources of the industry system as a whole, in addition to other government agencies, leading national universities, and large industrial companies.

The program will also see the participation of financial investors, leading international operators of incubators, and accelerator networks.

All parties involved are expected to work hand-in-hand to provide comprehensive, high-quality support to the industrial entrepreneurs registered to the program.

The initiative also falls in line with the Kingdom's Vision 2030 and the objectives of the National Industrial Strategy by increasing the base of mature, innovative, and globally competitive SMEs, Jarrah stressed.

In return, this will effectively help address the challenges of industrial entrepreneurs and SMEs in the Kingdom, thereby encouraging more industrial entrepreneurship and improving continuity of industrial startups in the long run, he added.

Egypt starts mediating an end to Israel-Gaza strikes, rockets

News Desk

GAZA/JERUSALEM: Israel hit Islamic Jihad targets in Gaza for a second day on Wednesday and Palestinians launched hundreds of rockets across the border, setting off sirens as far away as Tel Aviv, while Egypt began efforts to mediate an end to the fighting.

The second round of cross-border fire in a week came after Israel launched strikes on Tuesday against three Islamic Jihad commanders it said had planned attacks against Israelis, following months of escalating violence.

Cairo, which has mediated in previous rounds of fighting, had begun brokering a ceasefire, Islamic Jihad spokesman Dawoud

Shehab said.

Israel was examining Egypt's proposals, Foreign Minister Eli Cohen told public broadcaster Kan.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in broadcast remarks that Islamic Jihad had sustained a serious blow, but cautioned: "The campaign is not over yet."

The Israeli military said it hit more than 130 targets, including rocket-launching sites, as blasts sounded across the Palestinian enclave.

A late-night bombing of a building in the southern Gaza area of Khan Younis killed the head of Islamic Jihad's rocket launching force, identified as Ali Ghali, and

two other militants, the Israeli military and Islamic Jihad said.

Minutes after Wednesday's air-strikes began, sirens sounded in Israel—mostly among border communities but soon also in and around the commercial capital Tel Aviv, 60 km (37 miles) north of Gaza.

More than 400 rockets were fired, Netanyahu said, a quarter of which fell short in Gaza.

The joint command of Gaza's militant groups, which includes Islamic Jihad and the enclave's Hamas rulers, claimed responsibility for the salvos.

However Israeli military officials said they had seen no signs that Hamas, which is believed to have hundreds of rockets in its arsenal,

had fired any missiles itself.

They said Israeli strikes were directed only at targets linked to the smaller Islamic Jihad group, an Iranian-backed militant organization based in Gaza which has been increasingly active in the occupied West Bank for the past year.

White House national security advisor Jake Sullivan emphasised the need for de-escalation during a call on Wednesday with the head of Israel's National Security Council, Tzachi Hanegbi, the White House said.

"Sullivan ... noted continued regional efforts to broker a ceasefire, and emphasized the need to deescalate tensions and prevent further loss of life," according to a White House readout.



Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	192.5	194.5
Bahrain Dinar	756.61	764.61
Canadian Dollar	214	216
China Yuan	41.11	41.51
Danish Krone	41.85	42.25
Euro	316	319
Hong Kong Dollar	36.15	36.5
Indian Rupee	3.47	3.58
Japanese Yen	2.1	2.15
Kuwaiti Dinar	927.88	936.88
Malaysian Ringgit	63.96	64.56
New Zealand \$	180.17	182.17
Norwegians Krone	26.41	26.71
Omani Riyal	738.94	746.94
Qatari Riyal	77.96	78.66
Saudi Riyal	77	77.8
Singapore Dollar	215	217
Swedish Korona	27.47	27.77
Swiss Franc	319.03	321.53
Thai Bhat	8.43	8.58
U.A.E Dirham	79	79.9
UK Pound Sterling	362	365
US Dollar	292	296

Targeting armed forces for political ends is dangerous: Mian Zahid Hussain

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said the arson and violent actions after the arrest of Imran Khan are regrettable. Intolerance and slander have increased greatly in the country's politics, which is a threat to the country's security, he said. Mian Zahid Hussain said that some leaders have developed a habit of using foul language while patience, tolerance and understanding is nowhere to be seen. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that incessant attacks on



political opponents and important institutions

are ongoing and people are being provoked by continuous lies, which is destroying society. The business leader said that the current situation is not acceptable because such violence can transform the country into a lawless land. Mian Zahid Hussain said that there is a series of fabricated allegations against the top officials of important institutions which is dangerous for the country's security. For the past year, some politicians have been continuously making accusations against the top officers of the army and intelligence agencies for their political interests, but no evidence is being presented to the concerned quarters. If the officers of these institutions have acted against the law, then they must be punished, but the decision cannot be taken on the streets but in the courts, but the politicians are avoid-

ing invoking the law which is incomprehensible. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the violent protests, riots and attacks on sensitive places on the arrest of the former prime minister are very sad. The PTI leadership has expressed indifference to the violent acts and strongly condemned them. The perpetrators of violent protests, riots and arson should be punished by taking legal action. Currently, the country's economy is in the oxygen tent, the IMF program is suspended, inflation has exceeded 36% and the Pakistani rupee has fallen to the lowest level in history. In this situation, patriotism demands that economic activities should not be harmed while political confrontations should be avoided and protests should be kept within legal limits.

Ghana Pakistan's biggest trade partner in West Africa: Ayesha

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Ghana Farhat Ayesha hosted a dinner in honour of the Pakistani trade delegation visiting Ghana.

The delegation is visiting the African country under the leadership of Umar Shahid Butt, Vice Consul of Ghana in Pakistan to explore business opportunities.

The dinner was attended by ambassadors of different countries posted in Ghana, representatives of the National Chamber of Commerce, representatives of the Ghana Investment Promotion Center and the Association of Ghana Industries.

Speaking at the dinner ceremony, Farhat Aisha said this is the second major interaction between the business delegations of the two countries during the last eleven months.

Earlier, a Ghanaian business delegation visited Pakistan in February and participated in a trade exhibition held at Lahore.

A joint business council was established which is playing a key role in promoting business and industrial relations between the two countries.

She said that Pakistan is the largest



trading partner and the trade between the two countries is worth 67 million dollars and there is a strong chance of growth.

On this occasion, Umar Shahid Butt said that there is a stable government in Ghana, a large percentage of the Ghanaian population is literate and the workforce is skilled, which makes Ghana an

ideal country for business. There is a lot of scope for increasing the trade volume between Pakistan and Ghana. He noted that due to the pandemic and Ukraine war, the developing economies are currently facing difficulties which can be overcome by promoting mutual trade.

PSO stands with its people by supporting those in need

News Desk

KARACHI: Living up to its core values of Caring and Giving, Pakistan State Oil (PSO) launched a nationwide ration distribution drive to support the underserved communities recently.

Staying true to its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility, PSO stepped up and extended its support to the most remote and impacted communities spanning across Shikarpur, Nawabshah, Umerkot, Dera Murad Jamali, Quetta, Pishin, Jhal Magshi, Sheikhpura, Faisalabad, Rajanpur, Bahawalpur City, D.I. Khan/Tank, Swat and Abbottabad. Through this drive, ration worth PKR 100 million comprising of essential provisions such as food and groceries were distributed to 22,000 families in an attempt to ease their financial burden.

The company is committed to serving the nation and has ensured that it makes a difference in the lives of its people through numerous CSR initiatives impacting the lives of more than half a million people in health and wellbeing, education, environment, and social development.

PKR hits record low amid political crisis

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee on Thursday recorded all time low against the US dollar with the local unit losing Rs 11.16 in interbank trade.

According to the details, the US dollar continues to rise on the fourth day of the business week and remains at the highest level. In interbank trading, the dollar became more expensive, reaching Rs296 at the highest level, meanwhile, selling for over Rs300 in the open market.

Forex dealers stated that the banks are selling dollars to the importers at Rs298, after the decline of Rs11.16 in two days.

A day earlier, the Pakistani rupee hit a new record low against the US dollar on Wednesday with the local unit losing Rs5.16 in interbank trade.

Following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan, clashes erupted between Imran's supporters and police. The interior ministry has suspended mobile broadband services in the country.

The PKR was being traded at Rs290 per dollar in the interbank market, a decline of Rs 5.16 from yesterday's close of Rs284.84.

Karachi police arrested Quetta-based smugglers

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh police foiled a drugs smuggling bid and arrest two accused lawbreakers from Karachi.

According to the details, the Mochko Police foiled a drug smuggling bid and arrested two Quetta-based smuggler who was trying to smuggle drugs into Karachi on a motorcycle. In a statement, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kemari Fida Hussain Janwari stated that during the snap checking on checkpoint, police party stopped two young men aged 16 and 20-years-old and checked the motorcycle due to the suspect's nervousness and doubt.

He said that the accused very skillfully removed the seat foam of the motorcycle and placed 10 packets of hashish weighing more than 12 kg and put a regazine cover on it just to trick the police on the checkpoint.

The arrested drug suppliers identified as Jan Muhammad and Abdul Nabi, who were smuggling drugs for the fifth time from Quetta to Karachi with drugs. The suspects used to receive Rs.35,000 per packet of drugs supplied.

Precautions

ISLAMABAD: A view of the close filling station near NAB Rawalpindi Office, due to safety measures during the tensed environment of Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Saudi oil revenue for Q1 2023 calculated at \$81 a barrel: Al Rajhi Capital

News Desk

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's budgeted revenue for the first quarter of 2023 was "likely" revised to be based on the Brent price of \$81 per barrel, according to a report issued by Al Rajhi Capital.

The report stated that the previous budget estimates were based on oil prices at approximately \$77 a barrel, which was reassessed following the decision of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies to cut production.

"As per our assessment, the government's 2023 budgeted revenues are likely based on an assumption of Brent at \$81 per barrel," said Mazen Al-Sudairi, head of research at Al Rajhi Capital.

Saudi Arabia's total revenue is predicted to have reached SR1.13 trillion (\$301 billion) in the first quarter, compared to SR1.12 trillion in the same period of 2022.

Increased spending on the military, education, and health sectors compared to the same period last year caused the budget to slip to a deficit of SR2.9 billion in the first quarter of 2023.

This year's spending plan is in line with earlier projections but with a fiscal surplus of SR16 billion as opposed to SR9 billion estimated earlier.

Al-Sudairi noted that the additional expenditure "is reflective of the government's measures to support economic growth."



Non-oil revenues are likely to increase slightly above last year, backed by the non-oil gross domestic product growth.

"For 2023, we believe oil revenues could reach SR709 billion and non-oil revenue at SR421 billion," added Al-Sudairi.

As for expenditure, the government anticipates spending roughly SR1.1 trillion this year, a 4.32 percent annual decrease from

2022 but consistent with earlier projections. Since the government expects revenues to be higher than previously anticipated, a larger surplus of SR16 billion has been built in, according to the report.

In 2022, Saudi Arabia recorded a 31 percent rise in government revenues to reach SR1.26 trillion, the Ministry of Finance said last month.

The world's top oil exporter recorded real GDP growth of 8.7 percent in 2022 leading to the Kingdom's first budget surplus in almost a decade, coming in at SR103.9 billion, up from prior estimates of SR102 billion.

Oil revenue reached SR857.3 billion, while non-oil revenue was recorded at SR410.9 billion in 2022. However, non-oil revenue surged in the fourth quarter, rising 19 percent from the prior-year period, outperforming oil revenue which increased 17 percent in the fourth quarter, according to a Ministry of Finance report.

Total spending in 2022 rose 12 percent from the previous year to SR1.16 trillion. Saudi Arabia's total public debt stood at just over SR990 billion at the end of 2022.

UBL Goes Live on Temenosto PowerDigital Corporate Lending

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: United Bank Limited (UBL), one of the largest banks in Pakistan with 11million customers, has gone live with Corporate Lending on Temenosto digital banking platform as part of a comprehensive digital transformation of the bank's retail, SME and corporate banking for domestic and international customer on the Temenosto platform.

The Temenosto Corporate Loan Origination solution, implemented with NdcTech, will help UBL to meet growing demand for digital customer experiences and win business with corporate clients in a highly competitive lending market that has seen demand slowed by global economic conditions and rising interest rates.

A pioneer in digital banking, UBL is working with Temenosto and NdcTech to further leverage the Temenosto platform to provide an integrated, digital experience for all retail and corporate customers, covering the entire customer lifecycle from onboarding and origination to servicing.

Offering composable banking services - built on microservices and accessible via APIs - the Temenosto platform will enable UBL to quickly develop new products at lower risk and cost that bring real benefits to customers.

Muhammad Faisal Anwar, Chief Information Officer,

UBL, commented: "We are delighted to give with corporate lending on Temenosto digital banking platform. The solution enables us to elevate the digital experience for corporate customers and achieve operational excellence, helping us to increase customer satisfaction and drive revenue growth. We look forward to building on this success and our close partnership with Temenosto and NdcTech."

William Moroney, Managing Director - Middle East and Africa, Temenosto, said: "Congratulations to UBL on this successful go-live. This well-executed implementation will transform the lending experience for UBL's corporate customers. UBL has a clear vision for the future of banking with digital-first customer experiences. We look forward to building on this success across the bank's domestic and international business."

Ms. Ammara Masood, CEO & President from NdcTech, added: "We are proud to celebrate this important milestone with UBL in Pakistan. Going live with Temenosto's loan origination solution is a great leap forward in UBL's digital banking transformation that will give the bank an edge in the corporate market. It also sets a high bar as we continue to partner with them to leverage the composable banking capabilities of the Temenosto platform."

Smartphones

MediaTek pushes Flagship Smartphone Performance further with the Dimensity 9200+

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: MediaTek has expanded its Dimensity portfolio with its new Dimensity 9200+ chipset for flagship 5G smartphones. This new offering builds on the success of its predecessor with a performance upgrade while maintaining power efficiency for longer battery life and better gaming experiences.

Supporting higher clock speeds than its predecessor, the Dimensity 9200 chipset, the Dimensity 9200+ combines one ultra-core Arm Cortex-X3 operating at up to 3.35GHz, three Arm Cortex-A715 super-cores running up to 3.0GHz, and four Arm Cortex-A510 efficiency cores at 2.0GHz. To give the Dimensity 9200+ an additional boost for gaming and other compute-intensive applications, MediaTek boosted the chipset's Arm Immortalis-G715 GPU by 17%.

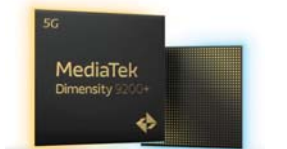
"We continue to raise the bar for flagship performance and power efficiency with the Dimensity 9200+, ensuring device makers have access to the most powerful mobile gaming features available today," said Dr. Yencheng Lee, Deputy General Manager of MediaTek's Wireless Communications Business Unit. "With faster raytracing and fluid gameplay at high frame rates,

combined with MediaTek's power saving technologies, you can enjoy incredible visuals, epic effects and extended battery life."

The Dimensity 9200+ has a 4CC-CA 5G Release-16 modem that fluidly switches between long-reach sub-6GHz and super-fast mmWave connections. The chipset also supports Wi-Fi 7 2x2 + 2x2 with up to 6.5Gbps data rate, along with Bluetooth 5.3. MediaTek's Bluetooth and Wi-Fi coexistence technology allows Wi-Fi, Bluetooth low energy (LE), audio, and wireless peripherals to connect at the same time with extremely low latency and without interference.

Key features of the MediaTek Dimensity 9200+ include:

- HyperEngine 6.0: Further improving the gaming experience with adaptive performance technology capable of sustaining high framerates and minimizing latency.
- Second generation TSMC 4nm-class process: Ideal for ultra-slim designs in a variety of form factors.



Iqra University organized 34th National Games 2023 Torch Relay Drive Ceremony

Sports Reporter

KARACHI: The 34th National Games 2023 Torch Relay Drive Ceremony was hosted by Iqra University (IU) in collaboration with Higher Education Commission (HEC) on May 6. The torch relay drive would be held in Quetta from May 22 to 30, 2023. It was initially commenced from Mazare-Quaid in the morning, after which the torch was lit traditionally. Later, the torch made its way to Iqra University's main campus. The chief guest of the ceremony was the Sindh Provincial Minister for Labour Saeed Ghani and several dignitaries attended the event including the Karachi Administrator Dr. Saif-ur-Rehman, HEC Director General Sports Javed Ali Memon, former captain of the Pakistan Hockey Team Nasir Ali, CEO of Dr. Essa Laboratory and Diagnostic Centre, Prof. Dr. Farhan Essa, Chairman Pakistan Karate Federation, Mr. Muhammad Jahangir and Sindh Agriculture University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Fateh Muhammad Marri including

the sports enthusiast students of Iqra University. Sports play a vital role for every healthy society," said Mr. Ghani while addressing the ceremony. "Sports will keep the youth away from all the negative activities and after playing at the national level, these participants will get the opportunity to showcase their talent on an international level," he said, adding "Pakistan currently has the largest percentage of young people ever recorded in history, hence, they should be provided with healthy activities."

"Iqra University has won around 446 medals in sports up till now," said Mr. Baig while addressing the audience in the university's auditorium. According to the senior sports journalist, Quetta has been given the honour to host the 34th National Games 2023 Torch Relay Drive after 14 years.

"It's a message of peace which has started from Karachi, will travel to Peshawar, Islamabad, Muzaffarabad, Lahore before reaching Quetta on May 14," said Mr. Jehangir. "We are also planning to host a sports competition which would be organised by HEC at Iqra



University," he informed the audience.

The HEC sports director general highlighted that through this torch, we want to convey the message of peace and harmony. He informed the audiences that the representative of Balochistan was also present at the tomb of Quaid. "Balochistan is in our heart. I would like to thank the chief secretary of Balochistan for support-

ing us. We will keep promoting the emerging talent of sports in Pakistan and we should give this opportunity to the youth to create a positive impact of sports in the country." Moreover, the guest of honour Dr. Essa said, "I believe that along with education, sports is equally important for the grooming of the students." He further maintained that it feels amazing to know



that a large contingent of around 800 athletes under HEC is going to participate in the national games this year. He also appreciated the management and on-ground administration team for arranging such a wide magnitude sports event in Quetta. He also highlighted that hosting similar sports events in future may one day help us in bringing international cups to host

in Pakistan and may prove as a key indicator to tackle the economic crisis. Moreover, the Karachi Administrator Dr. Rehman was pleased to attend this ceremony. "I want Karachi to host more such events as it will promote peace and harmony in the city," he said.

At the end, shields were awarded to all the guests and Olympians present in the ceremony.

Seven wickets among right-arm pacers Mohammad Ali and Aamir Jamal helped Pakistan Shaheens

Sports Desk

LAHORE: In turn, at stumps, Pakistan Shaheens were 115 for one in 24 overs and were trailing by 48 runs with nine wickets in hand. Captain Imran Butt (27, 33b, 4x4s) returned back to the pavilion after adding 63 runs for the opening wicket with Mohammad Huraiera. Huraiera (60 not out, 79b, 9x4s, 1x6) and Omair Bin Yousuf (19, 34b, 2x4s, 1x6) returned undefeated as they added an unbroken 52 runs for the second wicket.

Earlier, after being put into bat, Zimbabwe A lost a century from the last match Joylord Gumbie for seven to Ali with 12 runs on the board. After the departure of Gumbie, opening batter Tadiwanashe Marumani was joined by Dion Myers and the pair knitted 110 runs for the second wicket. Myers (50, 108b, 9x4s, 1x6) after scoring his fifth first-class half-century was next to return back to the hut. He was bowled by left-arm spinner Mehran Mumtaz, who bagged 11 wickets in Shaheens' victory



in the first four-day match.

At the score of 130, Marumani (66,

100b, 8x4s, 1x6) was caught by wicket-keeper Haseebullah off Aamir. Both Haseebullah and Aamir are playing their first match on the tour, after they replaced Rohail Nazir and Mir Hamza, respectively. Qasim Akram was the third change by Shaheens, who is playing in place of Mubasir Khan.

Following the departure of two set batters, Zimbabwe A were unable to recover and the pace bowling duo of Aamir and Ali were all over the opposition, bowling them out for 163 in 56.4 overs.

Ali returned with figures of four for 36 in 14.4 overs, while Aamir and Mehran snapped three wickets each.

Scores in brief:

Zimbabwe A 163 all out, 56.4 overs (Tadiwanashe Marumani 66, Dion Myers 50; Mohammad Ali 4-36, Mehran Mumtaz 3-36, Aamir Jamal 3-51)

Pakistan Shaheens 115-1, 24 overs (Mohammad Huraiera 60 not out, Imran Butt 27, Omair Bin Yousuf 19 not out)

Pakistan team hopes to secure top position in Four-Nation C'ship

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan team hopes to secure a top position in the Four-Nation Basketball Championship scheduled to be held in Maldives this year.

In a statement on

Wednesday, Pakistan

Basketball Federation Secretary General, Khalid Bashir said, "Our main target is to secure a position in the said event as the Pakistan team will be participating in any international championship after a long time."

In this regard, Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has called a total of 25 players for the national training camp here at the Pakistan Sports Complex.

The three-day trials were held to select the probable for the Pakistan basketball team under the supervision of the Pakistan Basketball Federation. Around 80 players were nominated by the affiliated units of PBBF to feature in these trials.

The selection committee was headed by Col. (R) Shujaat Ali Rana, while members including Muhammad Riaz Malik and Maudood Jafri, shortlisted the players for the training camp.

Bashir said the selected players would go through extensive training to enhance their skills and fitness standard during the national camp.

He said the players include both experienced and young players. The players selected for the camp includes Hamza Bin Javed (Army), Muhammad Shahbaz Ali (Army), Atif Shah (Army), Muhammad Shahid (Army), Imad Ahmed (Army), Rana Haris Ahmed (Faisalabad), Sameer Khan (Hayderabad), Sammar Abbas (Islamabad), Ali Hamza Kazmi (Islamabad), Zain Ali (Karachi), Safi Ullah Khan (Lahore), Ibtisam Murtaza (Lahore), Muhammad Hamza (Multan), Zia Ur Rehman (Navy), Muhammad Umair Jan (PAF), Saqib Ullah Khan Mahsood (PAF), Mehtab Akram (PAF), Naeem Ullah (Peshawar), Abdul Wahab (Peshawar), Izhar Ullah (POF), Rana M Usman (Police), Muhammad Usman (Police), Muhammad Hamid (Rawalpindi), Muhammad Sajawal (Sargodha) and Zain ul Hasan Khan (Wapda).

Pakistan Shaheens pacers outshine Zimbabwe A



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pacers Mohammad Ali and Aamir Jamal's outstanding bowling led Pakistan Shaheens down Zimbabwe A for a paltry 163 on day one of the second four-day match at Mutare Sports Club in Mutare.

Seven wickets among right-arm pacers Ali and Aamir bundled out Zimbabwe A for a paltry 163 on day one of the second four-day match.

In turn, at stumps, Pakistan Shaheens were 115 for one in 24 overs and were trailing by 48 runs with nine wickets in hand. Captain Imran Butt (27, 33b, 4x4s) returned to the pavilion after adding 63 runs for the opening wicket with Mohammad Huraiera. Huraiera (60 not out, 79b, 9x4s, 1x6) and Omair Bin Yousuf (19, 34b, 2x4s, 1x6) returned undefeated as they added an unbroken 52 runs for the second wicket.

Earlier, after being put into bat, Zimbabwe A lost a century from the last match Joylord Gumbie for seven to Ali with 12 runs on the board. After the departure of Gumbie, opening batter Tadiwanashe Marumani was joined by Dion Myers and the pair knitted 110 runs for the second wicket. Myers (50, 108b, 9x4s, 1x6) after scoring his fifth first-class half-century was next to return back to the hut. He was bowled by left-arm spinner Mehran Mumtaz, who bagged 11 wickets in Shaheens' victory in the first four-day match.

At the score of 130, Marumani (66, 100b, 8x4s, 1x6) was caught by wicket-keeper Haseebullah off Aamir. Both

Haseebullah and Aamir are playing their first match on the tour, after they replaced Rohail Nazir and Mir Hamza, respectively. Qasim Akram was the third change by Shaheens, who is playing in place of Mubasir Khan.

Following the departure of two set batters, Zimbabwe A were unable to recover and the pace bowling duo of Aamir and Ali were all over the opposition, bowling them out for 163 in 56.4 overs.

Ali returned with figures of four for 36 in 14.4 overs, while Aamir and Mehran snapped three wickets each.

Scores in brief: Zimbabwe A 163 all out, 56.4 overs (Tadiwanashe Marumani 66, Dion Myers 50; Mohammad Ali 4-36, Mehran Mumtaz 3-36, Aamir Jamal 3-51).

34th National Games

Training camps of different games begin on the directions of DG Sports Punjab at various venues

LAHORE: The training camps of different games got underway on the directions of Director General Sports Punjab DrAsifTufail at various venues for the preparation of 34th National Games scheduled to be held at Quetta.

Director General Sports Punjab DrAsifTufail in a statement on Wednesday said that around 300 players and team officials have reached Nishtar Park Sports Complex for training purposes. "In the first phase, the training camps of Gymnastic, Baseball, Taekwondo, Cycling, Rugby, Rowing, Tennis, Basketball, Bodybuilding, Judo, Karate and Squash will be organized at different venues".

Director General Sports Punjab DrAsifTufail further said that Sports



Board Punjab will provide best facilities including top class food during the

training camps. "We want to decorate our teams with the best training so that

they can carve out remarkable results in the National Games," he maintained.

Director General Sports Punjab DrAsifTufail said that all the participating players will be given best training under the supervision of professional coaches. "We are quite upbeat that Punjab athletes will offer satisfactory performance and win more medals than other participating contingents".

Director General Sports Punjab DrAsifTufail urged the participating players to prepare themselves fully for the mega event. "For winning a greater number of medals, our players must be in excellent physical shape. The coaches and trainers must focus on gaining top level fitness during camp training," he elaborated.

Barcelona legend Sergio Busquets to leave club

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Sergio Busquets will leave Barcelona in June at the end of his contract, the midfielder confirmed Wednesday, ending a highly successful era at the club.

"The moment has arrived to announce this is my last season at Barcelona," said Busquets on Instagram.

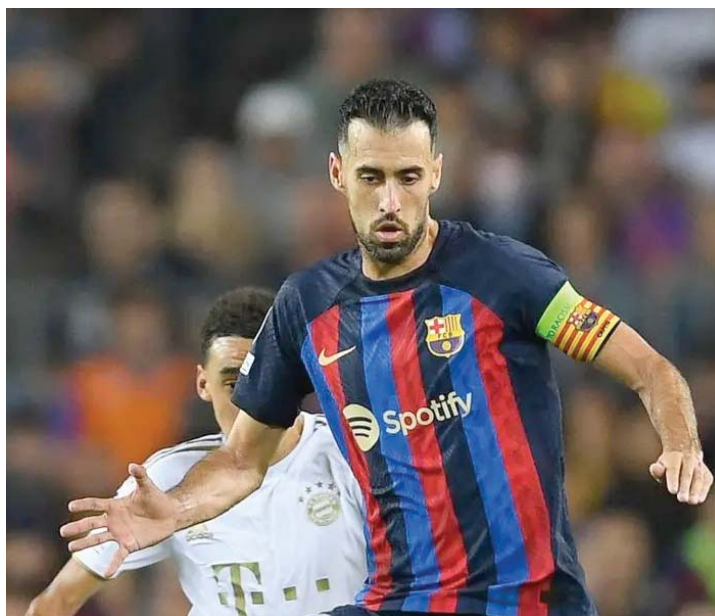
"It has been an unforgettable journey."

Busquets has won the Champions League three times with Barcelona and La Liga on eight occasions before this season, with the Catalans set to triumph again for the first time in four years.

The 34-year-old has been a key player for Barca since breaking into the first team under their former coach Pep Guardiola in 2008, making over 700 appearances to date.

He did not say where he might go next, with Spanish reports suggesting he may move to a team in Saudi Arabia.

"It has been an honour, a dream, a pride. It has been everything to be able to defend and represent this badge for so many years, but everything has a begin-



ning and an end," continued Busquets. "Although it has not been an easy decision, I think the time has come."

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez, who played with Sergio Busquets in the team's midfield for several years, wanted

the midfielder to stay next season, but said the decision was up to him.

The veteran has long been thought to favour a move to Major League Soccer in the United States at the end of his Barcelona contract, with Inter Miami one of the teams mentioned.

However, in recent days, Sergio Busquets has been linked in Spanish media with a move to the Saudi Arabian top flight.

Former Barcelona forward Lionel Messi, a close friend of Busquets, is another player who may end up in the oil-rich kingdom after sources close to negotiations told AFP it was a "done deal" for the Argentine forward to move to the Middle East.

However, Messi's father and agent Jorge Messi said Tuesday that the World Cup winner's future would only be decided at the end of the season.

Sergio Busquets won the World Cup with Spain in 2010 and the European Championship in 2012, a key fixture in the national team for nearly 15 years until he retired from international duty in December.