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PM Shehbaz warns 'state enemies' of strict action

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Violence after Imran arrest

Army deployed to avoid unrest

Punjab, KP and Islamabad administrations requested for Pakistan Army deployment

US, UK back 'rule of law' in Pakistan

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The top diplomats of the United States and Britain together called on Tuesday for adherence to the "rule of law" in Pakistan after former prime minister Imran Khan's arrest triggered nationwide violence. "We just want to make sure that whatever happens in Pakistan is consistent with the rule of law, with the constitution," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told a joint news conference in Washington. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly, speaking alongside Blinken, noted that Britain enjoyed "a longstanding and close relationship" with Commonwealth member Pakistan. "We want to see peaceful democracy in that country. We want to see the rule of law adhered to," Cleverly said. Both declined to comment in further detail, with Cleverly saying he had not been fully briefed on the situation. "As we have said before, the United States does not have a position on

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SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Interior Ministry on Wednesday approved army deployment in Islamabad, Punjab, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to address the deteriorating law and order situation across the country. Following Imran's arrest, massive protests broke out across the country, with a number of demonstrators gathering outside military cantonments, General Headquarters (GHQ) Rawalpindi, and offices of the Frontier Crops. The ministry's notifications stated that the federal government was "pleased to authorise the deployment of army troops and assets for maintaining the law and order situation across Punjab in aid of civil power". They added that the government took the decision to exercise the powers conferred under Article 245 (functions of armed forces) of the Constitution and Section 4 (3) (ii) of the Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 (to discharge such functions as specified in the said act). The Interior Ministry notifications highlighted that the exact number of troops, date, and area of deployment would be worked out by the provincial government in consultation with Military Operations Directorate, General Headquarters. "The date of requisitioning of the said deployment will be decided subsequently after mutual consultation

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Imran Khan fears 'slow poisoning'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan said on Tuesday that "they" inject that caused slow death to a person injected. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Mr Khan appeared before the court in the Police Lines that was declared court as a one-time compensation. The court gave seven-day physical remand in Al-Qadir Trust case. Imran Khan said during the hearing that he was shown warrants on reaching the NAB office. The former PM questioned what record the NAB wanted. He said that all the money in question was released with the approval of the cabinet. The PTI Chief also said that he had spent Rs 100 million on legal proceedings so far. Mr Khan also said that he was arrested on the court premises and glasses were broken on the court premises. He told that he could not use the wash-room during the last 24 hours. He also prayed to conduct his meeting with his doctor Dr Faisal.



PESHAWAR: Radio Pakistan (PBC) building set on fire by protestors. - APP

PM warns 'state enemies' of strict action

Says damaging public property is an 'act of terrorism'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Wednesday that strict action would be taken against "state's enemies" as he slammed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf for violence that gripped the country after PTI Chairman Imran Khan's arrest in the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case. PM Shehbaz termed damaging public property an "act of terrorism" and "enmity" towards the country. The prime minister began his address by saying that Pakistan's political history had been "very bitter". He added that never had revengeful acts in politics rendered good results. The prime minister said "terrorists and elements who are enemies of the state" should immediately desist from their "anti-state activities", warning that the "miscreants" would otherwise be dealt with an iron hand. The premier said the "protection of the state and ideology of Pakistan is more precious to us than our lives and we will not allow anyone to conspire against it". He added, "Nor will we let their nefarious designs be accomplished." Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that the "real role" and responsibility of political leadership is to not allow their workers to trespass legal boundaries during any arrests. "As a political worker, we can't express happiness on any arrest.

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Audio leaks emerge

Multiple arrested, dead as violent protests continue

Four dead in Peshawar, 84 injured; police say nearly 1,000 arrested in Punjab

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Following the arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, violent protests continued across the country for second day. Education institutions across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have been closed "until further orders", the province's education department has said. The death toll from violent protests in Peshawar has climbed to four, Lady Reading Hospital spokesperson Muhammad Asimsaid. He said more than 84 wounded people had been brought to the facility today, adding that the injured persons were being provided medical aid. Meanwhile, the spokesperson of the Khyber Teaching Hospital said that seven injured people were brought to the facility today. A constable, identified as Hakim Khan, was injured during firing by demonstrators, the Islamabad police have said. It added that the injured constable is out of danger now.

Earlier, the Islamabad police had said that protesters at the Police Lines - which was given the status of a court venue as a "one-time dispensation" before PTI chief Imran Khan was presented there in two cases - had repelled the law enforcers. "Law enforcers have been directed not to shy away from taking legal action against anyway moving towards Police Lines," it added. Police have arrested another 23 protesters in Karachi as demonstrations against PTI chief Imran Khan's arrest continue. Gulshan Superintendent of Police Zafar Siddique Chaanga said, "We have arrested a total of 23 miscreants - 12 at the Insaf House on Sharea Faisal and 11 at Millenium Mall." Protests were staged at the Insaf House near Nursery on Shreea Faisal - the metropolis' main thoroughfare - and the intersection between Rashid Minhas Road and Stadium Road near Millenium Mall.

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PTI's protests were planned: Marriyum

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that former prime minister Imran Khan was arrested in a corruption case. In a statement, the minister said that at least 15 notices were sent to Imran Khan in Al-Qadir Trust case which was being investigated by National Accountability Bureau and he was wanted by the NAB. "Imran Khan was supposed to file a reply in the Al-Qadir Trust case, but he did not appear in this case," she remarked. She said when Imran Khan was arrested yesterday the PTI leaders instigated party workers on arson and sabotage. She maintained that whatever the

PTI activists did yesterday was not a public reaction, rather it was done in a pre-planned manner. She said that the PTI leadership today claimed that yesterday's violent protests were not done by their party workers. When the PTI workers were damaging public and state property yesterday, she questioned why didn't its leadership stop them from doing so. The minister said that no political party reacted like this on the arrest of its leaders in the past. She said PML-N leaders including Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz, Shehbaz Sharif, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi,

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Briefs

Audios exposed plan of Imran

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Senior Vice President and Chief Organiser Maryam Nawaz alleged on Wednesday that the leaked audio conversations of the PTI leaders exposed the sabotage plan of the party chief Imran Khan, ARY News reported. Commenting on political unrest after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan's arrest, Maryam Nawaz said in a Twitter message that the nationals have not come out anywhere in Pakistan after the arrest of 'evil'.

PTI distances itself from violence

DNA

PESHAWAR: Former speaker national assembly Asad Qaiser has distanced PTI from the violent protest after the arrest of Pakistan-e-Insaf chairman Imran Khan, media reported. As per details, the PTI leader AsadQaiser said in a tweet that they condemn the attack on Edhi ambulance in Peshawar. He maintained that they do not encourage such attacks. PTI workers will peacefully protest across the country till the release of party chairman Imran Khan. Furthermore, AsadQaiser claimed that there are some serious threats to Imran Khan's life that's why PTI protestors are enraged.

Al-Qadir Trust case

Imran handed over to NAB for 8 days

A sessions court indicts PTI chief in the Toshakhana case

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court on Wednesday granted the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) eight-day remand of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, who was arrested a day earlier from the Islamabad High Court (IHC) premises in connection with the Al-Qadir Trust case. Separately, a sessions court also indicted the PTI chief in the Toshakhana case. Both the hearings were held at the Islamabad Police Lines, which was given the status of a court venue as a "one-time dispensation" late on Tuesday night, amid tight security. During the hearing of the Al-Qadir Trust case, the corruption watchdog requested the court to grant 14-day remand of Imran.

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Asad Umar arrested

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: A day after PTI Chairman Imran Khan was arrested from the premises of the Islamabad High Court (IHC), the capital police on Wednesday arrested party secretary general Asad Umar from the same place. Umar was heading to the Supreme Court to challenge Imran's arrest, when he was taken into custody by the police in cases pertaining to causing damage to state property, according to the Islamabad police. PTI's official Twitter account

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Pak Army terms May 9 as 'black chapter' in history

Army showed extreme patience, tolerance, restraint; Military calls PTI's actions "an example of hypocrisy"

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: In a rare response, the armed forces said on Wednesday that May 9, 2023 - the day when chaos gripped the nation following Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's arrest - would go down in history as a "dark chapter". In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said after the PTI chief's arrest from the Islamabad High Court on National Accountability Bureau's orders, a "well-thought-out plan" was witnessed in which the army was targeted. "Soon after [Khan's] arrest], there were organised attacks on army properties and installations and anti-army slogans were raised," the military's media wing said. The ISPR called the PTI leaders "hypocrites" for inciting their workers against the armed forces on the one hand, and other, they were praising the military - in a bid to overshadow their criticism.

"On the one hand, these evil elements vigorously stir up public sentiments to fulfil their narrow and selfish goals and on the other, they do not get tired of highlighting the importance of the army for the country while throwing dust in the eyes of the people. This is an example of hypocrisy." The military's media wing added that a group of people - draping political garb in their lust for power - have done unprecedented damages to the country that Pakistan's enemies since its inception have not. "The army showed extreme patience, tolerance and restraint and without caring about its own reputation worked with extreme patience and endurance in the wider interest of the country." The statement mentioned that when such a situation was created under nefarious, a heinous bid was made to force the military to give an immediate response, which could be used for nefarious political purposes. "The army's mature response, however, thwarted this conspiracy. We are well aware that behind it were orders, directives and

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Joint efforts essential for the uplift of poor households: Marri

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Shazia Marri, Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety (PA&SS), Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) said joint and concerted efforts of all stakeholder including Federal Government, provincial governments, and international development partners are vital for financial uplifting of the poor and under privileged household in Pakistan. She stated this while speaking at concluding session of first ever three-days National Social Protection Conference in Murree on Wednesday.

The Minister said that Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), through its direct cash transfer initiative - Benazir Kafaalat - is currently supporting over 9 million household living below the poverty line. She, however, noted with concern that there was still a large number who were facing economic hardship and eagerly looking towards the government to support them.

Federal Minister Ms. Shazia Marri said that the Benazir Income Support Programme is proud to be the largest social safety program in the country. Over the past 15 years, the program has learned a lot and achieved a lot. She said that for this success, we are extremely grateful to our development partners, that showed their interest on a continuous basis for the welfare and stability of this institution. Chairperson BISP, Ms. Marri further said that it is the responsibility of the government to help the poor people of the country. For the economic take-care larger part of deserving people, it is important that all the federal and

provincial institutions should formulate such policies which can ensure support to the poor and underprivileged. We have been able to achieve good results through mutual consultation and better utilization of available resources, she continued.

She further noted that it is imperative to provide social safety to all the deserving people of the country. To achieve this goal, there is a need to create a system under which all social safety programs and initiatives can be integrated. "The outcome of this conference will provide guidelines in which direction we have to work further", she noted and said, "dialogue held at the Social Safety Conference should continue in the future as well".



She suggested the establishment of a consultative forum between BISP and all stakeholders to consolidate the efforts of all Federal and provincial governments and international institutions for the welfare of underprivileged segments of the society. The Minister informed the participants that recently under the Benazir

Income Support Program, the start of education and health related programs for the people of Balochistan has been approved, which is a great news for the people of Balochistan. She said that there is a need to invest in human capital development. We need to adopt international best practices and plans to deal with social safety and economic crises caused by natural disasters. Federal Minister Ms. Shazia Marri expressed her gratitude to the participants of the conference, especially GIZ, for creating such an opportunity to share thoughts and experience. Earlier, Ms. Shazia Marri taking part in the debate session, said that for the first time in Pakistan, Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto gave "Roti, Kapra aur Makkaan" to every citizen, and Benazir Income Support Program is also a continuation of the same. She urged the experts and responsible officers from the provinces that by taking advantage of this conference, to devise such a system at the provincial level that can ensure rapid assistance to the people in emergency situations. On the third and last day of the conference, the representatives of international institutions, high-level officials and experts of the federal and provincial governments shared their view to discuss how government institutions can extend timely assistance to the affected people during crises situation caused by climate change or any other emergency. In the first session, UNICEF's Deputy Country Director in Pakistan, Anutha Kabor, mentioned last year's disastrous floods and gave suggestions for the protection of affected people, particularly children.



ISLAMABAD: President ICICI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari presenting shield to Minister of State for Industry and Production, Tasneem Ahmad Qureshi. —DNA

140 projects displayed in Industrial Open House

PESHAWAR: The final year students of Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute (GIKI) of Engineering and Technology on Wednesday displayed a total of 140 research projects in the two Industrial Open House (IOH) and 60 organisations, including multinational and national companies. Chairman Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) Engr. Muhammad Najeeb Haroon inaugurated the two-day event, while secretary PEC Engr Dr Nasir Mahmood Khan graced the occasion as guest of honour. Officials of the companies, Prof-Rector, Academics, Prof Dr Mohammad Hasan Zaidi, Pro-Rector administration and finance, Sardar Aminullah Khan, academia of various universities and students participated in the gathering. IOH is one of the major events in which a group of students in every faculty work for the entire year on a project under the guidance of their professors, displaying it in the two days event, aiming to show that they have developed new indigenous technology to facilitate people and resolve their confronting problems. The representatives of multinational and national companies from across the country observe and evaluate the projects of the students and conduct their interviews on the spot for jobs in their organisations before the convocation, which is expected to be held in June. —APP

APP staffers face loss of vehicles amid protest

PESHAWAR: The violent protests and attacks on the government offices, installations and public properties by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protesters, deprived the staffers of the Peshawar Bureau of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) of their valuables besides damage to vehicle of a senior journalist of APP. During an attack on the offices of Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) and APP Peshawar Bureau, hundreds of violent protesters damaged seven to eight vehicles parked in the premises of the buildings including a car worth Rs 1.7 million owned by senior journalist of APP Adeel Saeed. The angry mob broke wind and back screens, side glass and mirrors of the said vehicles and also took some valuables from inside the cars. According to Adeel Saeed, hundreds of violent mob broke into PBC and APP buildings. —APP

Pak-Iran Gas Pipeline is most important for Pakistan – Tasneem Ahmed Qureshi

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Industry and Production Tasneem Ahmad Qureshi said that the completion of Pak-Iran gas pipeline is the most important need of the hour. Inshallah, our party will come to power and complete the pipeline. Economic conditions are changing, God willing, Pakistan will never default. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Tasneem Qureshi said that ten different departments are working under the Ministry of Industry and Production so that the business community could provide input to further improve their performance to make them

more profitable. Vice President ICICI Engineer Azhar ul Islam said that the Ministry of Industry is very important and can be helpful for improving the economic conditions of the country. ICICI Group Leader Khalid Iqbal Malik, Former President and Secretary General of UBG Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi, Mian Shaukat Masood, Khalid Chaudhary, Saif ur Rahman Khan, Mahmood Waraich, Fayyaz Gul, Akhtar Abbasi, Zahid Qureshi, Babar Chaudhary, Malik Shabbir, Mirza Nisar and others also spoke on the occasion and gave useful suggestions for improving the country's economic situation.

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ANP lashes out at PTI workers for violence

PESHAWAR: Provincial President Awami National Party, Aimal Wali Khan Wednesday lashed out at PTI workers and said that those hoodlums were nurtured by Imran Khan who deceived people during his political career by raising misleading slogans of 'Riyasat-e-Madina'. In a statement issued by Baacha Khan Markaz here, he criticized PTI after spree of violence unleashed by PTI workers that burnt and damaged public properties. He said the PTI chief should have submitted to summons of court rather avoiding court proceedings. He said that ANP leaders never incited their party workers and always appeared in courts to face charges and allegations in a dignified and respectable manner. Aimal Wali said that National Accountability Bureau had arrested a 'certified' thief who should be made accountable to public for his corruption and misdeeds. —APP

MediaTek expands its Dimensity portfolio

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. Yenchu 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 4CCCA 5G Release-16 modem that fluidly switches between long-reach sub-6GHz and superfast 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. Sixth generation AI Processing Unit (APU 690): Efficiently powers AI-noise reduction and AI-super resolution tasks, and creates truly cinematic video through real-time focus and Bokeh adjustments. MediaTek Imagiq 890: Powerful flagship image signal processor that supports captivating capture, providing bright, sharp images and videos even in low-light scenarios. MediaTek MiraVision 890: —APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the federal cabinet. —DNA

KCCI president for gearing up Pak-Korea FTA to enhance bilateral trade, investment

KARACHI: President Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) Mohammed Tariq Yousuf, on Wednesday, underscored the need to gear up Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and Korea for enhancing bilateral trade relations and opening up new dimensions and investment channels. KCCI president while speaking at Korea Pakistan Business Forum 2023 stated that the year 2023 marks 40th anniversary of Korea-Pakistan business cooperation and diplomatic relationship those were built upon trust, brotherhood and generosity. He stressed on revival of Pak-Korea Joint Trade Com-

mittee to exploit existing opportunities and enhance bilateral trade and economic integration in the manufacturing, hydro-power sector, SME, finance, transport and education sectors and said "We look forward to enhanced future business cooperation between Korea-Pakistan businesses which would boost the economic activities and contribute to sustainable economic development." Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Suh Sangpyo, Director General of Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) Kim Sung Jae, Consul General Korea Yi Sunghu, Senior Vice President KCCI Touseef Ahmed, Vice Pres-

ident Haris Agar, President Automotive KIA Pakistan Muhammad Faisal, KCCI Managing Committee Members and prominent Korean businessmen in Pakistan were also present on the occasion. Tariq Yousuf noted that despite strong bilateral economic relationships and probability of export of various Pakistani products including marble and granite, pharmaceuticals, cement, leather, rice and sports goods to Korean markets, Pakistan's exports to Korea stood at only \$206 million in FY22 as compared to \$170 million in FY21. He mentioned that various corporate results in the stock market remained

phenomenal in 2022 despite Pakistan's ongoing economic challenges and top multinational companies operating in Pakistan have also posted massive growth which clearly indicates Pakistan's economic resilience. He appreciated Korean companies doing business here and urged them to enhance their production activities for improvement of Pakistan's overall industrial output. Commenting on South Korea's "New Village Movement" which has emerged as a global model for poverty eradication, he said that Korean companies could help Pakistan in capacity building of farmers, improving the

yield and uplift agriculture sector through technology transfer. He pointed out IT, Textile, forest conservation, recycling, coastal belts, technology parks in various potential rural markets in Sindh, Punjab and Baluchistan and joint ventures and investment in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) under CPEC as potential avenues for Korean corporate sector. Participation in each other's trade fairs and single country exhibitions would be a great way for the business community of both countries to explore new trade avenues and promotion strategies, he added. —APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

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May 06/UAE
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May 07/Kazakhstan
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May 08/Czech Republic
National Day
May 09/European Union
National Day
May 17/Norway
Constitution Day
May 21/Hungary
Armed Forces Day
May 22/Yemen Republic
Re-unification Day (National Day)
May 24/Eritrea
National Day
May 25/Argentina
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May 25/Lebanon
Liberation and Resistance Day
May 28/Azerbaijan
Republic Day
May 28/Ethiopia
National Day



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Pak-Saudi Arabia discuss Muslim Ummah's challenges

Raja Pervez Ashraf said, "Pakistan and Saudi Arabia share strong bonds of brotherhood based on mutual trust, respect, culture, religion, and history. To further reinforce these ties, it is essential to engage in parliamentary exchanges

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of Saudi Arabia Shura Council Dr Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, met with Pakistan's National Assembly (NA) Speaker, Raja Pervez Ashraf, to discuss bilateral relations, challenges facing the Muslim ummah, and important regional and global issues. Talking to the Chairman, Raja Pervez Ashraf said, "Pakistan and Saudi Arabia share strong bonds of brotherhood based on mutual trust, respect, culture, religion, and history. To further reinforce these ties, it is essential to engage in parliamentary exchanges." The speaker hailed the Saudi parliamentary delegation's involvement in the two-day international parliamentary conference. He said, "Both brotherly countries are ready to tackle challenges with mutual collaboration." He also lauded generous Saudi help to Pakistan on every difficult occasion. NA speaker highlighted the im-



portance of brotherly relations between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan for regional prosperity and expressed optimism towards the improvement of Saudi Arabia-Iran relations. Cooperation between the parliaments of both countries was also emphasized.

The digitization initiatives introduced by the Pakistani Parliament were acknowledged by the speaker. He also noted significant successes achieved through these initiatives. The speaker suggested exchanging successful digitization practices with the Saudi Shura Council. Chairman of the Saudi Shura Council, Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, had extended an invitation to Raja Pervez Ashraf to visit Saudi Arabia. "The successful organization of events commemorating

the Constitution of Pakistan for a month is commendable," said Dr Abdullah Al-Sheikh.

"The people and government of Saudi Arabia desire stable development and prosperity for Pakistan. The exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two brotherly countries will further strengthen bilateral relations." Dr Abdullah Al-Sheikh congratulated the speaker on the 50th anniversary of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and praised the successful organization of month-long events in that regard.

He said, "The people and government of Saudi Arabia want to see Pakistan as a stable and prosperous country." "The exchange of parliamentary delegations between the two brotherly countries will bolster bilateral ties." The speaker said, "Pakistan highly values its brotherly relationship with Saudi Arabia. Islamic nations face challenging issues.

Constant cooperation must for addressing challenges: Tarar

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 Adaptability 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 let to economic inequality and democratic disconnect. Tarar underlined that the deepening gulf between the political elite was also eroding democracy.

Moreover, he said amid the prevailing scenario challenges to judicial independence and media integrity had also threatened democracies, he added. The federal minister said sub-national and the local level governments were helpful in managing disasters and crisis management in any untoward situation. He commented that the governments would need to avoid locking in old economic structures, business models and invest in information technology and high-tech infrastructure development. The Minister noted that an ambitious policy to address climate change made economic management better and it was needed to cut trade barriers to climate-friendly goods and bring reforms. He also highlighted that social media and the spread of digital techs had posed more threats to the rights of the people. The tests for the government private sector and tech community were created to ensure security and rights, he said. Senator

Farooq Hamid Naik of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) said, "The Constitution protects citizens' rights and freedoms by limiting government powers and ensuring the rights of the masses. He added that stability was necessary for the smooth functioning and working of the government. "Adaptability for Constitution is equally important so that it can live with the changing demands and needs of the time." "Changes in the constitution will have to be made in a responsible and balanced manner," he said. Senator Naik informed the Convention that the Parliament so far made 26 amendments to the Constitution, to address various challenges in prevailing times due to the growing influence of non-state actors, rising misinformation, and others. The democratic institutions remained responsible for the reach and rehabilitation of the people promoting transparency and accountability in the system, he added. Climate change, terrorism, and migration needed to

be addressed by the democracies whereas digital platforms could help in managing natural disasters, the Senator said. Senator (R) Farahtullah Babar of PPPP said the constitutional democracies were facing challenges the world over but these have been pronounced more in Pakistan. The challenge of populism was rising in constitutional democracies and Pakistan was also facing it, he added. Fake news, he said had threatened democracies and institutions not only the private sector but also others involved in perpetrating wrong information. Deputy Speaker of the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan, Adil Abish Oglu Aliyev said the Constitution included the opinions of all the people that were being amended from time to time. "Interesting social media have become a part of our lives now that cannot be abolished," he said. He said the incidents of human rights violations and genocide were a matter of concern whereas legislation should be made in that regard.—DNA

ECC approves settlement agreement of Roosevelt Hotel

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 negotiations 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 Khurram 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.—DNA

Islamabad Police issues traffic plan for commuters

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Police on Wednesday issued a detailed traffic diversion plan for the commuters of the twin cities, as several roads have been blocked due to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) protest in response to the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan. In a tweet, the Islamabad police said that due to diversions placed for traffic at Tramri Chowk, the residents can use Rawal Dam Chowk as an alternate route. "The diversions have been placed at both sides for traffic from NESCOM Chowk to Police Lines Turn from Srinagar Highway and the travelers can use 9th Avenue as an alternate route," it added. People coming to the Melody, G-6 can use A K Fazlulhaq and Suhurwardi Roads as an alternate due to diversions placed at both sides for traffic at main Melody Road from Shuhada Chowk to Aabparah Chowk. As for the diversions placed on both sides of traffic at Serena, Nadra, Express and Ayub Chowk in Red Zone, commuters can use Margallah as an alternate Red Zone entry-exit point. The Islamabad Police said all other roads of Islamabad were clear for traffic.—APP

Metro bus service suspended in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: Metro Bus service has been suspended in Rawalpindi following violent protests. The public is facing difficulty commuting due to the suspension of the metro bus service in Rawalpindi. The service was suspended after Shamshabad, 6th Road, and Faizabad metro stations were vandalized by violent protesters. Police are conducting raids against protesters in different parts of the city. According to a police spokesman, 190 people have been arrested by the Rawalpindi police as a result of a crackdown against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s leaders, workers, and supporters to maintain law and order. He said, "190 people have been arrested so far in four FIRs registered in Civil Lines, Waris Khan, City and Sadiqabad Police Stations."—APP

IIUI holds moot on transition of universities to online mode

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. 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, the 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. The participants discussed adaptation to new technologies, best practices in online learning, blended learning, communication challenges in e-learning during covid-19, e-learning strategies, evaluation in online learning, future of online learning for universities, learning management systems, needs and challenges of online learning and research models & paradigms in online learning. Addressing the conference, Dr. N.B. 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. He shared IIUI's response to the Covid wave telling that university through its distance learning platform continued uninterrupted education. He said the upcoming national OD policy shall pave way for flourishing of OD system and most of the universities shall start work on it after notification of OD policy. He hailed the organizers of the conference for arranging a valuable conference on an important topic. He said that this is the age of online and distance mode of education and shrinking resources demand adoption of online distance learning. 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.—APP

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

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, a press release on Wednesday said. 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 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 boot camp. 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 socioeconomic 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.—DNA



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Briefs

IT Industry, Exporters perturbed over internet blockage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a strong critique, Muhammad Zohaib Khan, Chairman of Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), has lambasted the mindless, consultation-less and blanket blockage of internet services in the country due to the emergent political situation - as the IT industry has come to a standstill since Tuesday evening.

Internet is our lifeline, our office, our communications infrastructure and IT industry can't operate without it, he added.

Muhammad Zohaib Khan maintained that IT & ITes services are already under a lot of pressure on account of stagnation and experiencing probable decline in the exports of IT services due to the bad governmental policies & an utter lack of continuity in policies; and, now the political turmoil has completely stopped the IT industry's operations.

P@SHA Chief has vociferously & categorically demanded the immediate resumption of internet services to the IT industry. He also maintained that internet service quality in the country has already on a shrinking capacity; particularly, those of data services. He explained that no international buyer or importer will take this excuse that we need a few days leverage due to unavailability of internet - and, to be precise, credibility & goodwill achieved through timely delivery is everything in the IT export markets as once a client or order is gone, it is impossible to regain them. It is pertinent to note that most of the IT professionals are working from home today due to the precarious law & order situation in the entire country; and, may have to continue work from home for a few days to come in the backdrop of political uncertainty.

Muhammad Zohaib Khan has asked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to intervene directly as he did at the time of Wikipedia blockage; and, advice Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) to resume the internet services without wasting any time. -APP

Workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.2 billion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Workers' remittances recorded an inflow of US\$2.2 billion during April 2023. In terms of growth, during April 2023, workers' remittances decreased by 12.9 percent on m/m basis. Cumulatively, with an inflow of US\$ 22.7 billion, workers' remittances fell by 13 percent during first ten months of FY23 as compared to the same period last year. Remittances inflows during April 2023 were mainly sourced from Saudi Arabia (\$489.3 million), United Arab Emirates (\$382.1 million), United Kingdom (\$360.7 million) and United States of America (\$275.8 million).

Real estate is the backbone of the country's development

Companies in the exhibition will be part of the exhibition with new projects from June 9 to 11, Khurshid Barlas

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas along with the delegation including, Amin-ur Rehman, Shamraiz Iqbal, Fahad Barlas, Muhammad Fayyaz Awan of J7 icon along with the Federal Minister for Prevention Met with for Narcotics control Shah Zain Bugti. Chairman Khurshid Barlas also invited the Federal Minister to the second Quetta International Exhibition which is being held from June 9 to 11 June at Expo Aljanat Palace Quetta. A large number of various business communities associated with the Bank's project and tourism industry including renowned builders, developers, allied construction industry from across the country will participate in the exhibition. Companies related to real estate became a part of this exhibition with new projects. It will be an important exhibition in terms of investment. Which will create the best opportunities to get investment from national level to international level. The aim of the exhibition is to promote the construction and development of Pakistan, to improve the reputation of Pakistan, and efforts are being made to increase trade and investment in the country. Federal Minister Nawab-



zada Shah Zain Bugti appreciated the initiatives of Khurshid Barlas regarding trade. And assured them that they will participate in the second Quetta exhibition, the federal minister said that real estate is the backbone of the country's development. Finally, Khurshid Barlas also presented the shield to Federal Minister for Anti-Narcotics, Nawabzada Zain Bug

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No political motives behind Imran's arrest: Ahsan Iqbal

ISLAMABAD, May 10 (APP): 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



ple 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. As a sportsman, he ought to be championing sportsman spirit, tolerance and respecting the rule of law." Contrary to it, he said, Imran Khan chose the path of spreading anarchy, chaos and destruction in the

zement and corruption of \$160 million. Sharing details of the NAB case against PTI chairman Imran Khan, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said the \$160 million which was confiscated by the UK's National Crime Agency on money-laundering charges from a Pakistani real estate tycoon. "Mr Imran Khan, under a fraudulent deal of self-benefit, instead of depositing the recovered amount in the national exchequer, he allowed that amount to be deposited in a State Bank of Pakistan to settle the dues of the same person who was fined \$160

million... This is the worst kind of corruption as he did this to gain personal benefits." He said everyone knew that Imran Khan established a trust, Al-Qadir University, with his and spouse's name as owners and got the benefit of a huge chunk of land. "There are also audio recordings which talk of some jewellery gifts that Mr Imran Khan and his wife got from the same person," he added, terming it a 'big case'. The minister said the PTI chairman, under a malafide intention, allowed that money to be paid back to the same person, who was found guilty of money laundering, for his own personal benefit. "If such a case happens in Western countries whether it is US or UK, what will the law do, if there is a case against any prime minister or head of any government is found to be indulging in corrupt practices; won't the department concerned to investigate the case or proceed to arrest the accused. -DNA

NA speaker terms Parliament as centre of power

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. 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, Sha-

heed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. 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. The international constitutional convention provides a platform for participants to exchange ideas, insights, and experiences related to constitutional governance. -APP

Satrang to hold art exhibition today

ISLAMABAD: Satrang Gallery is gearing up to host an art exhibition titled "A Mirror on My Heart" at a local hotel here tomorrow (Thursday). The aim of holding an exhibition is to illuminate the intricate interplay between memory, desires, and landscapes through the masterful use of color schemes. The captivating exhibition would showcase the works of five brilliant young miniaturists Brishna Amin Khan, Hamza bin Faisal, Ramsha Haider, Umna Larab, Zafar Ali. "The event will be an exceptional showcase of contemporary artistry, offering visitors a chance to delve into the complex and interconnected world of human emotions and experiences," it added. -APP

PTI's violent protests condemnable: Sherry

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday termed the violent reaction of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) after the arrest of Imran Khan by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) as very alarming and condemnable. In a series of tweets, the minister said after a lawful arrest, such a burning siege has never been seen in the country. Senator Sherry Rehman said the attack on the residences of military officials and sensitive institutions was not a protest but an attack. "PTI has made a sad history. Imran Khan arrested all the opponents during his regime, but we never set fire to the country and attacked the institutions," she added. She added that Faryal Talpur was picked up from the hospital on Chand Raat, Maryam Nawaz was arrested from the hospital, and the opponents were kept in prison for two years. Sherry Rehman said after the martyrdom of Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Asif Ali Zardari raised the slogan of 'Pakistan Khape' (We want Pakistan) to reduce the anger and agitation of the people. "Yesterday Tehreek-e-Insaf ran provocative 'Stop Pakistan' slogans and trends on social media. Imran Khan has been arrested in a corruption case," Sherry Rehman said, adding, "If you are innocent, search and prove your innocence, as our leaders have proved in the past. Anarchy and arson will not prove Khan's innocence. -APP

SAARC Chamber hails decision for extending CPEC to Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD: The President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik on Wednesday said wisdom based decision to extend China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan is set to deepen trilateral cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI). In a press statement, he said that it was a good omen that the foreign ministers of Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan in recent trilateral talks expressed their determination to leverage Afghanistan's potential as a hub for regional connectivity. He said three foreign ministers also emphasized the significance of ongoing projects such as CASA-1000, TAPI, and Trans-Afghan Railway, highlighting their potential to boost regional connectivity and promote economic development and prosperity in the region. He said the ministers further agreed in principle to explore measures to facilitate the movement of people and trade activities besides boosting transit trade through the Gwadar port. Iftikhar Ali Malik said, "A peaceful, stable, and prosperous Afghanistan is in the best interest of the region." He said, "It's high time to further deepen and expand trilateral cooperation in the domains of security, development, and politics guided by the principles of mutual respect, equal-footed consultation, and mutual benefits." He said the security challenges must be addressed that pose a significant threat to regional and global security and directly impact the stability and economic prosperity of the entire region. He called upon the international community to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation and provide the necessary supplies, equipment, and technical assistance to relevant countries. -APP

President emphasises speedy justice

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. He 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. -APP

World Migratory Day to be marked on May 13

ISLAMABAD, May 10 (APP): World Migratory Bird Day will be marked on May 13 (Saturday) across the globe including Pakistan to highlight the need to protect migratory birds and their habitats. The United Nations is one of the many organizations that support this global awareness campaign. The 'Blue Jay' is one of the world's migratory birds. On the second weekend each May, people around the world celebrate World Migratory Bird Day by organizing public events such as bird festivals, education programs and bird-watching excursions. The event was created to help turn the world's attention to the wonders of bird migration and the need for their conservation. Each year, the total number of registered World Migratory Bird Day events has steadily increased along with the number of countries in which these events occurred. -APP

PNCA to create national database of visual artists

ISLAMABAD, May 10 (APP): The Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Wednesday decided to gather information on emerging visual artists across the country with the intention of building a comprehensive national database of these individuals. The artists could register by sending their bio-data and portfolio to 'nag.vadevents@gmail.com' and once the registration would be completed, PNCA would contact the artist for the upcoming events, an official told APP. "This initiative aims to not only create an extensive record of visual artists in the country but also to provide them with opportunities for growth and recognition in the art world." -APP

PTI protests; 190 arrested in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: At least 190 people have been arrested by the Rawalpindi police as a result of a crackdown against the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) leaders, workers and supporters to quell the law and order situation that resulted after the arrest of Imran Khan. According to details, 190 people have been arrested so far in four FIRs registered on Tuesday night and Wednesday in different police stations. The arrested PTI workers and supporters were allegedly involved in disturbing law and order situation and violent protests. The protesters blocked different city roads including Murree Road, Liaquat Bagh, Committee Chowk, Shamsabad, Faizabad, Rawat T-Chowk, Waris Khan, Kutchery Chowk, and other areas of Rawalpindi while violent skirmishes between the police and the protesters continued till

late Tuesday night. The protesters set fire to tyres and garbage lying on the side of the roads. The vehicular traffic on Murree Road was completely blocked on Tuesday night because of the protests and the protesters also pelted stones at the police. The police also began a crackdown to arrest PTI workers and leaders late at night. The local party leaders and workers were rounded up from Rawalpindi and its suburbs and shifted to different police stations. The Rawalpindi district administration on Tuesday imposed section 144 in Rawalpindi to control the overall law and order situation. According to a district administration spokesman, a ban on public gatherings and political activities was imposed across the city. Strict legal action would be taken against violators of section 144, he added. Section 144 was imposed after a meeting held

in Punjab Home Department, he informed. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Liaquat Ali Chatha said that strict implementation of Section 144 would be ensured by the district administration. Rallies, meetings and other gatherings would not be allowed and a complete ban on gatherings of more than four people would be ensured, he said adding, no one would be allowed to carry arms. City Police Officer Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani warned that violating the law, committing vandalism, attacking police, and blocking roads while protesting was not permissible. "There would not be any compromise on the rule of law or the protection of citizens' lives and property," he maintained. Meanwhile, City Traffic Police (CTP) spokesman informed that all main city roads were open for vehicular traffic.

He said that the traffic situation was normal on all main city roads 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. Special arrangements had been made for alternative routes in case of traffic diversion, he informed. Information about traffic load and the latest traffic situation was being provided to the citizens on FM 88.6 and official social media pages, the CTO added. The spokesman said that the citizens were advised to travel with 20 to 25 minutes extra time to reach at their destination in time and avoid any problem. -APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Insurance Ombudsman (FIO), Dr Muhammad Khawar Jameel, presenting the Annual Report 2022 of FIO to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad. -DNA

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Truss' Taiwan trip risky business

Western politicians wanting some attention have developed a penchant for popping up in Taiwan and throwing their weight behind its pro-independence authorities so they can buff up their image as principled politicians. The upcoming visit to the Chinese island announced by Liz Truss, the former UK leader, who has the dubious distinction of being the country's shortest-serving prime minister, being a case in point. Although such visits are intended to convey principled integrity, they only serve to show the unscrupulous opportunism of the visitors who readily dismiss the fundamental truth that Taiwan is "a province of China with no separate status", as stated in a UN resolution and generally acknowledged by most of the international community, so they can mouth off about a China threat. For such is the distorted narrative that prevails that bashing Beijing for its steadfast resolve to pursue reunification plays well with the constituencies these high-minded day-trippers hope to appeal to. As Truss should know, the one-China principle serves as the political foundation of China's relations with other countries, including the United Kingdom. She should also know that bilateral ties between Beijing and London have deteriorated in recent years as a result of the UK constantly trying to stick its oar into Hong Kong affairs. And she should be aware that UK Minister of State in the Department for Business and Trade Dominic Johnson is paying an official visit to Hong Kong this week, the first in five years by a senior UK official, which is widely perceived as signaling there has been a thaw in the frosty relations between the two sides. President Xi Jinping's special representative Vice-President Han Zheng, who attended the coronation ceremony of King Charles III on Saturday and met with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak during his stay, was assured that the UK values its relations with China and it hopes to jointly tap the broad prospects for cooperation in areas such as the green economy and sustainable development. Likewise, in an opinion piece published in the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post on Tuesday, Johnson said the "UK will continue to engage robustly and constructively" with China where their interests converge. Repair work on relations is clearly underway. Repair work that Truss threatens to sabotage with her trip. The ball is now in the UK government's court to keep the dire consequences of Truss' upcoming visit to Taiwan at bay and catch up with the "relationship renewal" trend of its neighbors in Europe.



Putin's home front

There were no surprises during Vladimir Putin's short speech to commemorate the 78th Victory Day in Moscow on Tuesday. Just as last year, Mr Putin drew risible parallels between the Soviet Union's role in defeating Nazi Germany and his own illegal war in Ukraine. Even the brutal head of the Wagner mercenary force, Yevgeny Prigozhin, has questioned this narrative, which casts Ukraine as a neo-Nazi puppet regime manipulated by a west intent on destroying Russia. But the president resolutely stuck to the usual script. The boilerplate polemic was, however, delivered against a subtly changed backdrop. This was the most muted 9 May celebration since Mr Putin began to co-opt the anniversary for his own revanchist purposes. Fifteen months after Russia's blitzkrieg invasion ground to a halt last February, the blood-soaked war of attrition taking place in eastern Ukraine has limited the Kremlin's capacity to put on a show in Red Square. The parade was light on heavy military equipment, compared with previous years, and did not feature an air display. In other parts of Russia, events were cancelled altogether, with officials citing security grounds. A day traditionally devoted to memory was thus overshadowed by present anxieties. Following the recent drone assault on the Kremlin, the attempted assassination at the weekend of a prominent ultra-nationalist, and successful acts of sabotage across the country, there is a new sense of vulnerability on Mr Putin's home front. The provenance of these attacks is murky - Kyiv has denied responsibility for the Kremlin drones - but their combined effect has been to introduce some sense of war-related jeopardy in Russian everyday life. The fearsome rate of Russian casualties, in battles that have yielded paltry territorial gains, has been accompanied by a notably lacklustre response to a recruiting campaign for new volunteers. New legislation to prevent registered conscripts leaving Russia is generating widespread anxiety and fear among the young. The dropping from Tuesday's parades of the march of the "immortal regiment" - in which relatives display portraits of those fallen in combat during and since the second world war - was explained in relation to security concerns. A fear that it could be used to publicly mourn those lost in Ukraine seems more plausible. During the Putin years, Russia's 9 May celebrations have become increasingly bombastic displays of military pride and menacing intent. This year, reality undercut the performance. Mr Putin was unable to point to any recent successes in the field. Western estimates suggest more than 20,000 Russian troops have died in Ukraine since December, and more than 80,000 have been wounded. Should Ukraine's long-prepared counteroffensive yield significant results, further setbacks on the frontline will compound the new sense of domestic unease. Ahead of a new and crucial phase of the war, Mr Putin played the same old rhetorical tunes. As the home front becomes more volatile, amid tensions embodied by Mr Prigozhin, he may begin looking for some new ones.

Mission accomplished, legally...

Qamar Bashir



Section 17(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) similarly prohibits police officers from entering the court's precincts to arrest an accused person who is attending or about to attend a high court hearing. This provision is intended to safeguard the judiciary's independence and the rights of the accused.

While there were over 140 cases against him being heard by the courts around the country, he was arrested on the spurious pretext of a six-year-old and forgotten case of Al-Qadir Trust, in which a petitioner had alleged the taking over of a piece of land by the KP government allegedly, without the consent of the trust, and held Imran Khan responsible for the takeover

I am certain that Imran Khan's arrest by the rangers, an army offshoot commanded by army officers and staffed by army Jawans is a coincidence and not the result of a deliberate effort to exclude police from this operation and the entire operation was conducted with IG police on the driving seat against what has been alleged by certain quarters. The allegations were also not true that he was arrested by the order of the Accountability Court because the government this time around was not able to arm twist the judiciary to do what they wanted.

His arrest was portrayed by certain sections as breaking in and disgracing the high court and its chief justice, forcing and dragging a wounded and frail Imran Khan by defying the court's sanctity and while doing so invited visible wrath of annoyed sitting Chief Justice, who took immediate action but at the end declared the arrest in accordance with law and by doing so put the entire nation on a razor's edge.

According to the Pakistani Constitution, every citizen has the right to a fair trial and due process of law, including the right to be free of arbitrary arrest or detention. Article 10 of the Constitution expressly states that no one shall be detained without being informed of the reason for their detention, nor shall anyone be denied the right to consult and be defended by a legal practitioner of their choice.

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While there were over 140 cases against him being heard by the courts around the country, he was arrested on the spurious pretext of a six-year-old and forgotten case of Al-Qadir Trust, in which a petitioner had alleged the taking over of a piece of land by the KP government allegedly, without the consent of the trust, and held Imran Khan responsible for the takeover. The case is sub judice with Peshawar High Court since 2017 awaiting final ruling in which no instance of corruption or corrupt practices as yet proven with finality, no financial transaction between the trust and Imran Khan was involved, and the case was primarily between the KP Government and a trustee of the Al Qadir trust. In addition, the PHC was seized to determine whether the KP government acted within the law in acquiring the land and whether the Al-Qadir Trust's rights had been violated. Even if Imran Khan is ultimately found to have committed no wrongdoing, the Court was also investigating whether the case was used as a diversion from other issues in order to damage his reputation and credibility.

According to a country's legal system, a trial court cannot assume a case that is being heard by its appellate court due to distinct jurisdictions and functions as trial

court at first instance hears and decides cases and if it is dissatisfied with the trial court's decision, it can appeal to a higher court, such as an appellate court. The arrest also attracted recent amendment made to the NAB ordinance, in which private transactions were excluded from NAB's purview, the NAB's pecuniary jurisdiction was limited to mega-scandals involving over Rs. 500 million, and the statute of limitations for filing a case was reduced to one year, with court permission. While the contested case is six years old, it is between a private trust and the government, and no government funds are involved. In fact, the government appeared to be the beneficiary, and land was acquired in the public interest. In addition, the case has not been classified as a mega scandal because no monetary value has been assigned to it to qualify it as such. The arrest hits Section 16 of the NAB Act which stipulates that an accused will be tried for an offense under the ordinance in the court under whose territorial jurisdiction the alleged offense was committed, as previously there were no territorial limits. This section specifies the territorial jurisdiction of the court, which means that the trial will take place in the area where the alleged offense occurred. This is intended to make it easier for the accused to defend themselves, reduce the burden on the accused and their families, and eliminate the need to travel long distances. Before this amendment, Section 16 did not specify any territorial limitations, and the accused could be tried in any accountability court in Pakistan. I hope while arresting Imran in Islamabad, all legal aspects were taken care of. It is also said in certain sections of the civil society that Imran Khan at the time of arrest was attending a high court hearing, at the orders of the said court and was under "judicial immunity" or "protection." This means that he could not have been arrested by any law enforcement agency while he was inside the court premises or during his transit to or from the court, unless there was a specific order from the court authorizing his arrest. Even if the law enforcing agencies had an arrest warrant issued by a lower court, such as a trial court that was subordinate to the high court, the law enforcement agencies were required to seek permission from the high court judge in session to execute the arrest warrant, and if the high court grants permission, then he could be arrested and taken into custody as the judicial immunity only applies to the jurisdiction of the high court and not to other courts. However, these apertions were set to rest by the order of Islamabad high court which termed the arrest in accordance with the law.

In any case, if an accused person is arrested without proper authorization or in violation of their judicial immunity while attending a high court proceeding, it is a serious matter and can lead to legal and administrative consequences for the law enforcement officials involved. For example, in India in 2019, the Delhi High Court reprimanded the Delhi Police for arresting a man within the

court premises while he was attending a hearing in a case. The court stated that the arrest was a clear violation of the fundamental right to access justice and the independence of the judiciary.

Similarly, in the United States, in 2019, a federal judge in Massachusetts ruled that the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) violated the constitutional rights of an undocumented immigrant by arresting him inside a courthouse. The judge stated that the arrest undermined the court's ability to provide access to justice and maintain the integrity of the judicial process. The LAE, may have already set in place the damage controlled mechanism which includes deploy additional police forces, rioting units and specialized units to areas where protests are taking place to prevent violence and maintain public order, arrest protesters engage in violent behavior and charge them with offenses such as assault, destruction of property, or disorderly conduct, use of force to disperse the crowds or prevent them from causing harm to property or people by the use of non-lethal weapons such as tear gas or water cannons, initiating legal action against the opposition leaders or on account of violating the laws and inciting violence and above all curb of freedom on assembly, speech, movement and expression including ban on all communication and information means like stopping the cell phone services and banning conventional and social media to stop spread of rumours heresy and false and fabricated information to incite violence but they must do this by taking in account that it can have significant economic and social effects, particularly on small businesses and entrepreneurs who rely on these platforms to market their products and services, and on vulnerable populations who rely on these platforms for support and information. If Imran Khan or any other leader have committed any wrongdoing, financial bungling, misappropriation of public funds or using illegal means of acquiring money, like all other such persons, no laxity should be shown to him but while living within the confines of constitution and law of the land and without any fear or favor. Trespassing the constitution or law of the land especially by the Law Enforcing Agencies means social economic disaster and breaking down of social order which is in no one's interest.

Permit me to quote the concluding remarks of a TV anchor who stated that he had never seen such an alarming, dangerous political situation in his professional career, and let us join him in pleading with all leaders, politicians, and influential stakeholders to have mercy on the unfortunate people, this country, and themselves, and to stop leading the nation towards total collapse and catastrophe.

— The writer is the Former Press Secretary to the President and Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France

A clash of titans and institutional turmoil

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



In recent times, Imran Khan has emerged as a major political figure, owing in large part to military support. His government, which was in power from 2018 to 2022, has been labeled a "hybrid government" due to this support

Ever since its inception, Pakistan has grappled with a series of institutional crises due to its unstable political system. Although the armed forces have played a significant role in the country's affairs, their involvement has never been formally declared. The military has ruled Pakistan for more than three decades and continues to hold sway over its political economy and key state institutions. In fact, several democratically elected governments have come to power with the military's approval, only to be ousted for infringing on military interests.

In recent times, Imran Khan has emerged as a major political figure, owing in large part to military support. His government, which was in power from 2018 to 2022, has been labeled a "hybrid government" due to this support. The judiciary also played a role in Khan's rise to power by weakening his political rivals, likely at the military establishment's behest. However, Khan's foreign policy and reluctance to endorse the appointment of the next chief of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) led to his dismissal as the top military official in 2022, losing the support of the officers. Khan's op-

ponents in the legislature promptly ousted him through a no-confidence motion.

Khan's dismissal inadvertently garnered him widespread support, as he claimed that it was part of a US-backed conspiracy enabled by corrupt Pakistani politicians. He sought to capitalize on this surge in his popularity by calling for early general elections. However, a fractious coalition of his political rivals ignored his calls, prompting Khan to dissolve the provincial assemblies in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where his party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), held a majority. The response was mixed, with Pakistan's President Arif Alvi announcing new elections in the two provinces at the end of April. However, the Election Commission of Pakistan insisted that new provincial elections could not be held early due to security concerns, apparently at the behest of the army. The Supreme Court declared the Election Commission's decision to delay the elections unconstitutional, but some judges recused themselves from the hearing. This led to the National Assembly passing a resolution rejecting the Supreme Court's decision and enacting legislation to curb the Chief Justice's powers.

Pakistan's institutions have faced numerous resource constraints and constant interference in their functions. However, the current rift between state institutions is unparalleled. If tensions continue to rise, the rule of law and democratic institutions may be undermined, leading to a lack of trust in the government's ability to manage the affairs of the state. This may result in increased polarization within society and the rise of extremist elements. The deteriorating security and economic situation may force the armed forces to take power again, although this time they appear to prefer staying behind the scenes.

To prevent this scenario from unfolding, it is crucial for all core state institutions to work together and respect each other's roles and responsibilities. Open communication and transparency can help resolve conflicts and prevent tensions from escalating. Civil society and the media should hold the government and its institutions accountable. Everyone must play their role positively, and institutions should avoid conflict to strengthen themselves. The whole nation must come together to work for the betterment of the country.

Briefs

Army deployed to avoid unrest

FROM PAGE 01
among both the stakeholders," it said. Earlier, the KP government also sought from the interior ministry armed the deployment of armed forces in aid of civil power under Article 245 of the Constitution. The letter stated that the request was made in view of the prevailing law and order circumstances apart from the safety of the life and property of citizens and government installations. No request has been made by the Balochistan government for the army's deployment yet. Immediately after the interior ministry authorised the deployment of the army in Islamabad, the capital police said that Pakistan Army troops were reaching several locations in Islamabad. It tweeted that the Rangers and armed forces were at the scene to maintain public order. "All those who are spreading incitement are requested to stop," it said and requested women and children to refrain from travelling. PTI vice chairman raises questions army deployment in Punjab. Immediately after the government approved the deployment of the Pakistan Army in Punjab, PTI Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi expressed shock at the move and raised questions about it.

US, UK back 'rule of law' in Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01
one political candidate or party versus another," White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said when asked about the situation in Pakistan. The United Nations said on Tuesday that it would monitor the political situation in Pakistan following Imran Khan's arrest to make sure that all political figures in the country were treated fairly, Anwar Iqbal in Washington adds. "Our concern is making sure that all of the political figures in Pakistan are treated fairly and, of course, that the due process is followed," said deputy spokesman for the UN Secretary-General Farhan Haq when asked to comment on Imran Khan's arrest. "So, we will follow this process as it goes on to make sure that our concerns are being addressed," MrHaq added while addressing a Tuesday afternoon news briefing at the UN headquarters in New York.

Pak Army terms May 9 as 'black...'

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complete pre-planning by some sinister party leadership," the statement added. The facilitators, planners, and political activists involved in the protests have been identified and now, strict action will be taken against them "in line with the law and all these evil elements will now be responsible for the consequences", the army said. The ISPR added that any further attack — by the "very group that wants to push Pakistan into a civil war" — on the army, including all law enforcement agencies, military, and state installations and properties will be met with severe retaliation. "No one can be allowed to incite people and take the law into their hands," the ISPR added. The PTI chief's arrest triggered severe protests from the party workers, who took to the streets across the country, damaging public and private property. Amid the chaos, at least four people have lost their lives so far.

Asad Umar arrested

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shared videos of Umar's arrest, which showed dozens of policemen surrounding and dragging him, presumably, towards a police van. Meanwhile, PTI former Member of National Assembly (MNA) Aliya Hamza Malik has been arrested in Islamabad, media reported on Wednesday. As per details, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf MNA was arrested from her Islamabad residence.

Barcelona legend Busquets to leave club after 18 years

"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 beginning and an end," continued Busquets

BARCELONA: 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, becoming the club's captain in 2021. Busquets is Barcelona's third-highest appearance maker of all time, playing for the club on 718 occasions, lifting 31 trophies in total. 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 beginning 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 Busquets in the team's midfield for several years, wanted the midfielder to stay next season, but said the decision was up to him. Busquets' team-mates past and present paid tribute to him on social media after he announced his future lay outside the club. "My friend, after so much we've lived through together, what can I say that you don't know?" wrote Barcelona defender Jordi Alba on Instagram. "You're leaving your home, having made an indelible imprint on Barcelona's history. "More than 700 games and a fundamental part of so many titles, and glorious nights that all Barca fans will forever remember." Former Barcelona playmaker Andres Iniesta said Busquets was "number one". — Agencies

Pakistan players move up in ICC rankings

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan's stranglehold on the MRF Tyres ICC Men's ODI Batting Rankings has been further strengthened with in-form opener Imam-ul-Haq the eye-catching mover on the latest update. Imam hit two half-centuries during the first three matches of the recently-completed ODI series against New Zealand, with the left-hander compiling a stylish 90 in the final game of the series to finish with 174 runs for the series at a healthy average of 58.

It helped Imam jump one place to fourth on the latest ODI batter rankings, with Pakistan now holding on to three of the top four players on the list ahead of this year's ICC Men's Cricket World Cup courtesy of skipper Babar Azam (first) and fellow opener Fakhar Zaman (third). South Africa's Rassie van der Dussen is the only player sandwiched in between the Pakistan trio, with the right-hander in second place and some 109 rating points behind Babar. Pakistan's 4-1 series triumph over New Zealand saw many of their best

performers rewarded on the latest rankings that was updated by the ICC on Wednesday, with pace trio Haris Rauf, Shaheen Afridi and Mohammad Wasim among the big winners. Rauf finished as the leading wicket-taker for the series with nine scalps and improved nine places to 42nd on the ODI bowler rankings as a result, while Wasim moved from outside the top 100 to 69th overall after his six wickets from three games. Afridi claimed eight wickets over the course of the series, while his entertaining cameo of 23* in

the fourth game helped the left-hander rise eight places to 36th on the list for ODI all-rounders. New Zealand's bevy of stars did not leave the sub-continent empty-handed, with pacer Matt Henry rising one spot to fourth on the bowler rankings courtesy of his eight scalps against Pakistan at a decent economy rate of 5.68. Stand-in skipper Tom Latham rose eight spots to equal 21st on the batter rankings following 282 runs for the series, while teammate Will Young shot up 24 places to 75th following his impressive knock of 87 in the series finale in Karachi.

Death toll in Congo flood passes 400

AT least 410 people have been confirmed dead and more than 5,000 others remain unaccounted for after the flooding and landslide disaster that struck the Democratic Republic of the Congo's South Kivu province last week, the Associated Press reported on Wednesday. The floods, which started as torrential rain on May 4 to 5, reportedly swept through the riverside villages of Nyamukubi and Bushushu, wiping out buildings along with fields of crops and livestock, leaving thousands of people homeless. Ulrich Crepin Namefebona, the emergency coordinator for Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in South Kivu, described the situation as "dire" and said that some areas have become unrecognizable. "In Nyamukubi, almost half of the village was destroyed. Due to flood damage, the main road between Nyamukubi and Kalehe can no longer be used, hampering the arrival of humanitarian aid," Namefebona said. Local authorities told the media on Tuesday that the death toll is still rising as efforts to rescue residents and recover bodies continue. "We're not able to deal with this many bodies as urgently as needed. We're searching for bodies with spades, with hands," John Kashinzwe Kibekenge, spokesperson for the Red Cross in South Kivu province, told Reuters. According to AFP, the government has delivered coffins to the affected communities after reports suggested many of the dead had been buried in mass graves. — Agencies

Imran handed over to NAB for 8 days

FROM PAGE 01

Judge Mohammad Bashir presided over the hearing. The PTI chairman's lawyer, Khawaja Harris, opposed the request and said that the case did not fall within the bureau's ambit. He further said that NAB had not shared the inquiry report either. "Everyone has the right to a fair trial," he said, calling for the hearing to be held in an open court. He further said a building had been constructed on the land belonging to Al-Qadir Trust, where people received education free of cost. Meanwhile, the NAB prosecutor told the court that Imran was shown the warrant at the time of his arrest. He also assured Imran's lawyer that the necessary documentation would be provided. "This is a corruption case which the UK's National Crime Agency has probed," he said, adding that the money received was meant to be transferred to the government of Pakistan. "Instead of the government, the funds that were received were transferred to Bahria Town," he said.

PM warns 'state enemies' of strict action

FROM PAGE 01

This is indeed a bitter moment of life through which we have passed," he said. However, he alleged that the PTI and party chairman Imran Khan had committed the "unforgivable crime" of enmity against the state through their actions after the former premier's arrest. PM Shehbaz has said that "all evidence" is present for the AL-Qadir Trust case against PTI Chairman Imran Khan. He said the National Accountability Bureau is conducting the investigation on the basis of the evidence and questioned how the PTI cabinet was kept "completely in the dark" about the matter. "How could it be the decision of the cabinet when the matter is of Rs60 billion of the national treasury?" He said under the old accountability law any person could be "picked up" for 90 days and getting bail was "impossible".

Multiple arrested, dead as...

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Media reports say the protesters attacked the law enforcers, who resorted to tear gas shelling and baton-charge. In a statement, Punjab police said action had been taken against those attacking government property, police force and law enforcement agencies in the province. "Miscreants involved in violent acts, vandalism, damage to public and private property throughout the province have been arrested," the notification said, adding that they had "seriously injured" more than 130 police officers and law enforcement personnel during the violent operations. The spokesperson then shared: "Police teams have arrested 945 law breakers and miscreants from across the province." The Punjab police spokesperson said: "More than 25 vehicles of the police and government agencies were destroyed and burnt."

PTI's violent protests...

FROM PAGE 01

Rana Sanullah, SaadRafiq and other leaders were also arrested but the PML-N did not react in this manner. Shehbaz Sharif was summoned in the SaafPani case and arrested in the Ashiana case by the NAB, she recalled. The PML-N had never given the kind of response to its leaders' arrests, that the PTI has given yesterday, she said. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that the country had been witnessing yesterday-like activities by PTI for the past many years. The minister said that after the arrest of Imran Khan, his medical check-up was done, and other SOPs were completed which negated PTI claims. She said when the police went to arrest Imran Khan in Zaman Park, Lahore PTI workers attacked police officials with petrol bombs.

Immediate PHF elections need of the hour

ISLAMABAD: The four-member Committee empowered to look into the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) performance and to suggest future course of action has recommended immediate elections of the federation to help streamline affairs ahead of the Asian Games, Olympic Qualifying round and Junior Asia Cup. The committee that met under Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Shoaib Khoso included former Olympians Akhtar Rasool, Shahnaz Sheikh, and Islahuddin Siddiqui. Following over two hours of meeting it was decided to forward recommendations to Patron in Chief, requesting for appointment of a care-taker committee to hold free and fair elections. One of the members of the committee told The News that the disaffiliated PHF did not bother to answer queries sent by the committee following the last meeting. "We have shared Pakistan's performance in international hockey during the last seven years and have recommended that there is a dire need for a fresh beginning. An ad-hoc or care-taker committee should be formed to hold free and fair federations elections so that Pakistan hockey should be set on a right track," one of the members said. The committee also decided to write on the un-supporting behavior of the federation. "The federation did not respond to all queries which were sent to them. The Committee has been formed under the direct orders of the Prime Minister who is the Patron in Chief. The PM has got all the powers to decide on hockey affairs. The Federation's inability to cooperate with the committee is surprising," the member added. The former Olympian said their first duty was to complete the task given by the Prime Minister and that is to go through the last seven years' performance and to finalize a roadmap for the federation's elections. "Look these are critical times for Pakistan hockey and not only the Asian Games are around the corner, the qualification for the Olympic Games is also at stake. We have given a clear verdict and that is to hold free and fair elections under a neutral set-up. The year 2023 is very important for Pakistan hockey, hence there is a need for immediate decisions." The member of the committee said these recommendations will also be forwarded to the PM appointed high-profile committee that includes IPC Minister Ehsan Mazari, Defense Minister Khawaja Asif, and Ayaz Sadiq "I think it will be a waste of time if we continue with repeated meetings. We have finalized the recommendations which are now being sent to the PM and to a high profile committee," he said. — DNA

National Games in jeopardy

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) has called an important meeting on the 34th National Games today following political unrest in the country. POA's secretary Khalid Mahmood confirmed Geo News that they have called a meeting with all stakeholders to decide the future of the upcoming National Games amid the current situation in the country. The president of POA, Arif Hassan will chair the meeting which will be attended by officials and members of the general council. All the stakeholders will discuss whether the National Games can go ahead as per schedule or not following the current countrywide protests due to the arrest of former Prime Minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman, Imran Khan. The official announcement will be made after the meeting today. It must be noted here that the 34th National Games are set to begin on May 12 in Quetta. All the preparations, under the supervision of Balochistan government, have been done to make the event successful.

Kenin moves into Rome second round



DNA

ROME: Sofia Kenin was made to work hard by Cristina Bucsa at the Italian Open on Tuesday, before the former Australian Open champion prevailed 6-3 6-7(8) 7-5 to set up a second round meeting with world number two Aryna Sabalenka. American Kenin, who was once ranked number four but has slipped to 134 in the world following her 2020 Melbourne Park triumph due to illness and injuries, was far from her best but managed to get past Bucsa in a little over three hours. "It was obviously tough, but I was able to somehow get through. I didn't feel a 100% but it doesn't matter, a win is a win and I'm going to take it," said Kenin, who converted seven of her 21 breakpoints. "It could have gone either way and it was a matter of who could be mentally strong. I felt tired and... after three hours I'd imagine that she was too, so I just had to battle it out." Former US Open runner-up Leylah Fer-

nandez was beaten 7-6(4) 4-6 6-3 by Aleksandra Sasnovich, while 2019 French Open runner-up Marketa Vondrousova overcame Kaia Kanepi 6-0 4-6 6-2 in other first round matches. Earlier, former doubles world number one Barbora Strycova downed Maryna Zanevska 6-1 3-6 6-3 for her first singles victory since 2020 following her return to the WTA tour at last week's Madrid Open from a two-year maternity break. The 37-year-old Czech will take on world number eight Maria Sakkari in the second round. "I can't believe it," Strycova, who celebrated her victory with her son Vincent, said. "I don't know how it feels because I didn't really process it. I went off the court and right away grabbed my son because he was hungry. So I wasn't really realising I won the match. I'm very happy. I'm a little shy about being happy. Also, I feel a little strange because he's here and I will be changing a diaper in a little while instead of getting a glass of wine."

Daniil Medvedev to focus on more spin

The Russian said he has been pleased with his form while practising in Rome and hopes to build on it during the tournament. "I always said the thing about clay is I don't have enough time... You don't have that much time to practice," he said

ROME: World number three Daniil Medvedev wants to focus on playing more spin and sharpen his slide to develop his game on clay as he gears up for Italian Open this week. Medvedev has previously described himself as a "hard court specialist", having won 18 of his 19 titles, including the 2021 US Open, on hard courts. The 27-year-old, known for his flat groundstrokes and all-court coverage, arrives in Rome on the back of a quarter-final exit at the Monte Carlo Masters and a last-16 defeat in Madrid. Asked about what he has to do in order to play good tennis on clay, Medvedev told reporters on Tuesday: "Play definitely more spin. Especially the sliding, I think the sliding was always a problem. "After Madrid, after I lost, a couple days I practised

there I tried really a lot to focus on the sliding, on the movement. I felt like I improved in these couple of days." Despite not being the biggest fan of clay, Medvedev reached the Monte Carlo semi-finals and Barcelona final in 2019. The Russian said he has been pleased with his form while practising in Rome and hopes to build on it during the tournament. "I always said the thing about clay is I don't have enough time... You don't have that much time to practice," he said. "I was not missing many balls here these last two days. It was tough for my opponents. Again, you never know. I say all this, but maybe first match is not the case. But is good to have some good practice." Med-

vedev will begin his campaign against Ugo Humbert or Emil Ruusuvuori. The Italian Open runs until May 21, with the French Open Grand Slam beginning in Paris a week later. Daniil Medvedev opened up about feeling disadvantaged during his 2023 Madrid Open loss, citing court size as a significant factor. In a recent press conference ahead of the 2023 Italian Open, the Russian revealed his disappointment following his fourth-round loss to Aslan Karatsev at the Madrid Open. Medvedev explained that he felt disadvantaged during the match, primarily due to the size of the court. According to Medvedev, the limited space made it difficult for him to return Karatsev's heavy serves, preventing him from playing at his full potential, something he encounters quite often due to his playstyle. While most players might not be overly concerned with court size, Medvedev highlighted how it plays a crucial role in his game, especially on clay courts. — Agencies

Briefs

President
condoles
with family
members
of martyred
soldiers

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday called the family members of the Pakistan Army soldiers who embraced martyrdom in Dir Duni area of North Waziristan on May 4, and express sympathies with them.

He talked to the family members of martyred Havdard Saleem and Naek Javed, Sepoy Bismillah Han, Syed Rajab and Hazrat Bilal and prayed to Allah Almighty to grant courage to them to bear this irreparable loss. The president saluted the martyrs for their utmost love for their country and devotion to their duties. Paying tributes to the services and sacrifices of the martyrs for their country, he thanked the families of the martyrs on behalf of the nation. He also prayed to Almighty Allah for the elevation of ranks of the departed souls in paradise.—APP

Pakistan
trade team
visits Ghana

DNA

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.

Spain plans
to ban
outdoor work

MADRID: Spain says it plans to ban outdoor work during periods of extreme heat. Second Deputy Prime Minister Yolanda Diaz told reporters Wednesday that the government will modify legislation covering occupational risks to prohibit outdoor work when the state weather agency, AEMET, issues red or orange alerts. The agency frequently issues such alerts when temperature increases pose a risk for citizens outdoors or for the environment. Last year was Spain's hottest since record-keeping started in 1961, and last month was the hottest and driest April on record. Much of the country is experiencing drought, and water reserves are below 50%. Diaz, who is also labor minister, said that the modifications would be announced by Spain's Cabinet, but gave no further details.

The government will hold a special Cabinet meeting on drought measures on Thursday. It wasn't immediately clear how the measure announced by Diaz would apply to workers such as farmers, farmhands, police, firefighters, gardeners or cleaners.—APP



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

Quadripartite foreign ministerial
meeting on Syria held

A meeting between the foreign ministers of Türkiye, Russia, Iran, and Syria was held on Wednesday in Moscow. At the meeting, participants exchanged views on efforts to normalize relations between Türkiye and Syria and discussed counter-terrorism, the political processes, and humanitarian matters, including the voluntary, safe, and dignified return of Syrians, according to the Turkish Foreign Ministry. In a tweet after the meeting, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said in the talks he stressed cooperation in the fight against terrorism, working together to establish a basis for the return of Syrians, bringing the political process in Syria forward,

and the protection of Syria's territorial integrity. Delivering an opening speech, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov thanked the ministers for coming to Moscow, noting that the quadrilateral meeting itself is an achievement, as it took some time and a lot of effort to organize it. The talks between Ankara and Damascus have a "noticeable positive impact" not only on the situation around Syria but also on the general atmosphere in the Middle East region as a whole, he stressed. Lavrov said the normalization between Türkiye and Syria will also open up new opportunities for the Astana format on the Syrian settlement.

KSA invites
Assad to
Arab summit

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia on Wednesday invited head of the Syrian regime, Bashar al-Assad, to attend the Arab League summit for the first time since the country's civil war in 2011. The Syrian presidency said al-Assad received an invitation from Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz to attend the summit in the city of Jeddah on May 19. The invitation came only days after Syria was readmitted to the pan-Arab body on Sunday after 12 years of suspension following the regime's brutal crackdown on pro-democracy protests. On Tuesday evening, Saudi Arabia announced the resumption of the work of its diplomatic mission in Syria. The Syrian regime has recently begun to exchange official visits and contacts with several Arab countries in recent months. — Agencies

The minister proposed directing experts from the four countries to draft a road map for Syrian-Turkish normalization to set some benchmarks, necessary to move forward. "This road map should clearly identify the position of the contracting parties of Syria and Türkiye on priority topics, including restoration of control of the Syrian government over the entire country, ensuring reliable security of the 950-kilometer border with Türkiye, excluding the possibility of cross-border attacks, infiltration of terrorists, conducting activities by individuals or groups of individuals aimed at to cause damage to a neighboring state," he said.

The minister added that the four countries share the same view on the necessity to fight terrorism and separatism. Last December, the defense ministers and intelligence chiefs of Türkiye, Russia, and the Syrian regime met in Moscow and agreed to continue tripartite meetings to ensure stability in Syria and the wider region. Iran was also included in the talks, with Türkiye previously saying that Ankara would be "pleased if Iran is involved in this process." Syria has been mired in a vicious civil war since early 2011 when the Assad regime cracked down on pro-democracy protests with unexpected ferocity.—Agencies

EU court
annuls
German aid
for Lufthansa

BERLIN: The European Court of Justice on Wednesday annulled the approval of 6 billion (\$6.6 billion) state aid to German airline Lufthansa during the COVID-19 pandemic. Judges in Luxembourg ruled that the EU Commission's approval of the German state aid in 2020 was "vitiated by several errors and irregularities" such as the misjudgment of Lufthansa's significant market power at certain airports. "The Commission committed several errors, in particular, by considering that Lufthansa was unable to obtain financing on the markets for the entirety of its needs, by failing to require a mechanism incentivising Lufthansa to buy back Germany's shareholding as quickly as possible," the court said in a statement. Budget airlines Ryanair and Condor pursued a legal campaign against the EU Commission for approving the German state aid to Lufthansa, stressing that it was unfair and not compatible with EU laws.—Agencies

Russia could
step up chemical
attacks in
Ukraine

BRUSSELS: "I'm sure NATO and the West would act if they [Russia] used chemical weapons in Ukraine. But having said that they stood by when Assad used such weapons in Syria," one expert told Euronews. An expert has warned Russia could use "horrific" chemical weapons in Ukraine, urging the international community to condemn their use. The Kremlin says it does not have any intention to use chemical weapons. On Sunday, Russia was accused of using phosphorus in the besieged city of Bakhmut, with Ukraine releasing footage purporting to show it raining down on its positions. While phosphorus is not classified as a chemical weapon in international law, its use against civilian areas is considered a war crime under the Geneva Convention because of its "indiscriminate" and "traumatic effects".

Phosphorus creates flash fires that are incredibly hard to put out. If people are hit with the chemical they suffer horrendous burns, which actually accelerate if they come into contact with water. It can, however, be legitimately used by military forces for night illumination and smoke screens. Despite being an "absolutely horrific weapon", Hamish de Bretton-Gordon, a British chemical weapons expert, says from a military perspective it can be "incredibly successful" on the battlefield. "It was a favourite weapon of the Syrian regime," he explained. "It was used to burn whole towns and villages in the northwest 'like some sort of mediaeval scorched earth policy.'—DNA

Talks with Armenia in US
moved 'one step forward'

BAKU: Azerbaijan on Wednesday said the process of normalization of ties with Armenia moved "one step forward" in the US last week. "Over the course of four days in Washington, we had rather intensive discussions around the peace treaty," Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov told reporters in Baku. Bayramov and his Armenian counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan took part in peace talks in the US capital between April

30 and May 3, with meetings at the White House and State Department. In a statement after the sessions, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken had said, "both demonstrated a sincere commitment to normalizing relations and ending the long-standing conflict between their two countries," adding that "with additional goodwill, flexibility, and compromise, an agreement is within reach." Despite not agreeing to a final deal, Bayramov said

there was headway. "We've gone one step further. We must approach this process realistically ... Azerbaijan constantly demonstrates commitment to the peace process," he added. "The approaches of the Azerbaijani side are unchanged and consistent: we are in favor of normalizing ties with Yerevan. Unfortunately, contradictory statements are heard from Armenia from time to time," Bayramov said. Commenting on the forth-

coming meeting between Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Brussels on May 14, Bayramov said they will become an integral part of the normalization process. Relations between the two former Soviet republics have been tense since 1991 when Armenia occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions.—DNA

Putin signs decree
terminating arms
treaty with NATO

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on Wednesday terminating the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). In the same decree, published on the government's portal, Putin delegated additional charge to Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Ryabkov, who will also serve as a presidential representative in presenting the matter in parliament. "Appoint Sergey Alekseyevich Ryabkov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, as the official representative of the President of the Russian Federation when the Chambers of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation consider the issue of terminating by the Russian Federation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe signed in Paris on November 19, 1990," the decree said. The CFE was a landmark post-Cold War arms control agreement signed on Nov. 19, 1990, in Paris between two military blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact.—APP

NATO military
chiefs discuss
defense plans

BRUSSELS: NATO military chiefs met on Wednesday to prepare for the leaders' summit to be held in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius in July. The officials will discuss new regional plans that "provide a much more precise requirement for what is needed to help transform our militaries," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said in his opening remarks. With the new arrangements that are expected to be adopted by the NATO leaders in July, "allies will know exactly what forces and capabilities are needed, including where, what, and how to deploy," he added. These "geographically specific plans describe how we will defend key and relevant places in our alliance against" the threats of Russia and terrorism, Adm. Rob Bauer, the chair of the NATO Military Committee, explained. "For the first time since the end of the Cold War, we will have objective, threat-based capability targets to offer to nations," Bauer added.—DNA

Italian govt arrests
smugglers of migrants

ROME: Italy's police arrested on Wednesday 29 people accused of smuggling migrants from Türkiye and Greece in an operation dismantling an international criminal group, authorities said. The authorities suspect the people arrested were part of a criminal gang with members in the three countries ferrying migrants across the eastern Mediterranean to southern Italy, normally on sailboats. The people are also accused of laundering the illegal proceeds from the migrants' trafficking activi-

ty. The arrests come after a four-year-long investigation by the Italian national police, coordinated by the anti-mafia prosecutor's office of Catanzaro, said Francesco Messina, anti-crime director of Italy's state police, in a statement. Italy has seen a massive rise in the arrivals of seaborne migrants from the beginning of the year although the majority of them come from northern African shores. The journey normally begins in Aksaray, where the migrants make their first contact with the Turkish cell

of the organization and are briefed about the details of the journey. Then they are taken across the border between Türkiye and Greece, first to Thessaloniki and then Athens. From the Patras port, they were then carried on sailboats to southern Italy. In other cases, the migrants were leaving directly from Türkiye, in particular from Izmir, authorities said. Italian smugglers then took the migrants to the north of Italy, from where they could reach the border cities of Ventimiglia or Trieste and attempt

to illegally cross the border to France and Slovenia, respectively, either by taxi, train, or hidden on trucks. The migrants were charged around 10,000 (\$10,949) per trip, police said. But the total cost of the journey could be up to 15,000, including the price of traveling across Italy for which local smugglers charged between 500 to 600. Authorities said the payment in Türkiye normally took place via the hawala system, an informal channel for transferring funds.—APP

Palestinian resistance launches retaliatory rocket attacks

NEWS DESK

GAZA: Palestinian resistance groups in Gaza have fired a barrage of rockets towards Israeli cities in retaliation for the regime's raids on the besieged coastal enclave, hitting targets as far as Tel Aviv. According to Israeli media, at least 100 rockets were fired towards Tel Aviv and illegal Israeli settlements in a span of just one hour. The al-Mayadeen television news network reported on Wednesday that Palestinian rockets had damaged a house in Tel Aviv. Earlier, resistance factions

fired rockets towards towns and settlements around Gaza, including Sderot and Ashkelon. Israeli hospitals announced that at least five settlers were hospitalized following the rocket fire, according to media reports. Israeli media also reported that a house was hit in Sderot. Dawood Shahab, an Islamic Jihad official, said the rockets were fired in response to Israel's intensified acts of aggression on Gaza, which has killed at least 17 Palestinians since early Tuesday, warning that the Israeli cabinet is responsible for the further escalation of tensions. Mosheer al-Masri, a senior member

of Hamas resistance movement, told Al Jazeera that the Palestinian response to Israeli air raids on Gaza was "a reflection of the resistance's covenant with its people and martyrs." "Its hand [the resistance's] is unified," he said, adding that "the door of reckoning with the Israeli occupation was still wide open." The retaliation comes as Israeli warplanes continued to hit targets in Gaza for a second day running. The regime said it targeted rocket launching infrastructure operated by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and the group's members. At least two Palestinians were killed

in the air attacks on Wednesday, bringing the death toll in two days of Israeli bombardment to 17, including children. Three senior members of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad were among those martyred on Tuesday. At least 37 Palestinians have also been wounded, Palestinian health officials say. Earlier on Wednesday, Israeli troops also raided the West Bank town of Qabatiya, killing two people. Islamic Jihad said the two as its members. Resistance groups promised to retaliate for the strikes, with Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh saying on Tuesday, "Assassinating the

leadership" in Gaza would bring "greater resistance." Widespread international condemnation poured in after the Israeli regime carried out fresh airstrikes against the Gaza Strip, leaving at least 13 Palestinians dead and 20 others wounded. Israel has closed its two commercial and people crossings with Gaza, a move that would stop the entry of goods, fuel and humanitarian aid. The latest deaths bring to around 130 the number of Palestinians killed so far this year. The latest violence comes on the second anniversary of Israel's 11-day aggression against Gaza.

Briefs

Joe Biden restricts asylum access at border

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: The U.S. rolled out a new regulation on Wednesday that will deny asylum to most migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border illegally, a key part of President Joe Biden's enforcement plan as COVID-19 border restrictions known as Title 42 end this week. The final version of the regulation, which becomes effective on Thursday, has no major changes from a draft published in February, a senior Biden administration official told reporters on Tuesday evening. The regulation creates a new presumption that migrants arriving at the border are ineligible for asylum if they passed through other nations without seeking protection elsewhere first or if they failed to use legal pathways for U.S. entry. The new restrictions, which will expire in two years, will apply to the vast majority of non-Mexican migrants since they typically pass through multiple countries en route to the United States.

China delivers two more frigates to Pakistan

DNA

ISTANBUL: China on Wednesday delivered last two of total four navy frigates to Pakistan, state media reported. According to Chinese daily Global Times, China delivered two Type 054A/P frigates to the Pakistan Navy in Shanghai. "This means all four warships of this class have been commissioned into the Pakistan Navy," said the report. Islamabad signed a contract with the China Shipbuilding Trading Company Ltd. (CSTC) for the delivery of two Type-054 A/P frigates in 2017. A deal for two more ships was signed in June 2018. Beijing has long been an economic and defense partner to Islamabad. Pakistan sealed a \$5 billion deal with China in 2016 for the acquisition of eight Chinese Yuan-class type-041 diesel submarines by 2028 to "address force imbalance" with its archrival India.

Elahi vows to continue protests

DNA

LAHORE: The arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan has stirred up a political storm in the country. The PTI president Chaudhry Parvez Elahi consulted PTI vice chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi on the current political situation just before the latter's arrest on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Qureshi said that Imran Khan, the PTI chairman, resides in the hearts of the people and is the only politician who is popular in all four provinces. He further added that the brutal arrest of Imran Khan was done to please Nawaz Sharif, and the entire country is in chaos today.

Afghanistan should not be isolated: China

The spokesperson termed it of great significance to the future of China-Afghanistan relations and regional counter-terrorism and security cooperation. 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

BEIJING: 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 children'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. The spokesperson termed it of great significance to the future of China-Afghanistan relations and regional counter-terrorism and security cooperation. 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 situa-

tion 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. - APP

Internet to remain suspended for indefinite period: PTA

ISLAMABAD: Amid protests across the country, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Wednesday said that internet services across the country will remain suspended for an indefinite period. The services were suspended as protests erupted after Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's arrest in Al-Qadir Trust case. The decision to block mobile broadband services was taken on the directives of the Ministry of Interior, it added. Social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter had been blocked in Pakistan since yesterday, whereas, internet service was also suspended in different cities after the arrest of former premier and PTI chief Imran Khan. - DNA

Indonesian envoy discusses sustainable development goals



DNA

FAISALABAD: The International seminar focused on 'Sustainable Production of Healthy Vegetable Oils: Policies & Practices to Achieving SDGs' was inaugurated in Faisalabad by H.E. Mr. Adam M. Tugio, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan along with Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Vice Chancellor of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF). The International seminar was organized by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with the Faculty of Food, Nutrition & Home Sciences, UAF. During the inaugural address, Indonesian Ambassador shared his views that the

global population is growing at an unprecedented rate and estimates predict that we will need to produce 70% more food by 2050 to feed the growing population. "We need the brightest minds and ideas to find creative solutions for addressing growing challenge of food security and malnutrition in developing countries", said the Envoy. He further added that vegetable oils are an essential component of the global food supply chain and it is necessary to ensure that their production is sustainable to meet the rising demand. Ambassador Tugio also said that palm oil production is a crucial element in the global food value chain as it is a vital source of calories for millions of people and its production is very efficient which requires less land and water, result-

ing in minimal environmental issues. Ambassador Tugio welcomed the academic collaboration of University of Agriculture Faisalabad with Bogor Agriculture University (IPB), one of world's top universities in Agriculture research. He encouraged the Pakistani students to study in top QS ranked Indonesian universities through Indonesian government and private scholarships offered by Indonesian institutions. Prof Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, the Vice-Chancellor of UAF expressed his appreciation to the Indonesian Embassy for their contributions and collaborative efforts that have significantly strengthened the academic relations between the two brotherly nations. During the seminar, panelists from Indonesia were represented by Prof. Dr. Amzul Rifin, SP, MA from Faculty of Economics and Management, Institute of Agriculture Bogor (IPB) and Mr. Djono Albar Burhan, S. Kom, MMgt, (Intl. BUS), CC. CL. from Indonesian Palm Oil Smallholders Association. Speaking on the occasion, both speakers presented their productive research in Vegetable oils to participating students and research scholars. Prof. Dr. Amzul Rifin pointed out that Indonesian government launched Indonesia Sustainable Palm Oil Certification (ISPO) in 2011 aimed at improving the competitiveness of the Indonesian palm oil on the global market and contribute to the objective to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Mr. Djono Albar Burhan shared with the PhD research scholars and faculty members of the UAF that palm oil is the only vegetable oil that has the Sustainable Certification and it produces more oil with less land use. He further noted that palm oil has the high productivity level of 4.27 tonnes per hectare per year if compared with other vegetable oils and it contributes to fulfill the UN sustainable development goals.

Drama at IHC over Tyrian case judgment

ISLAMABAD: Unprecedented drama was witnessed at the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday over the Tyrian White case against former prime minister Imran Khan when the majority judgment of Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir dismissing the petition was deleted from the court's website minutes after it was uploaded. The majority judgment, authored by Justice Kayani and assented to by Justice Tahir, a copy of which is available with Dawn.com, stated that the writ petition was "not maintainable from the very inception". It also deprecated the petitioner's conduct in filing the petition, noting that "the petitioner should have been mindful of the fact that the court is not a tool to be used by surrogates motivated for extraneous consideration." A three-judge larger bench comprising IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir had reserved its verdict on April 30 on the petition seeking Imran's disqualification for concealing his alleged daughter Tyrian White in his nomination forms submitted to contest the 2018 general election. Not long after the majority judgment was deleted from the court's website, a press release was issued by the court, stating that the "opinion" of the two judges did not constitute judgment of the court and is against court rules and norms. It said the opinion of the judges was released without the issuance of a cause list or intimation to the parties and their counsels. It further said that the signature of Chief Justice Farooq, who is the third member of the bench, was also missing from it. - APP

Political turmoil sinks rupee against US dollar

KARACHI: A day after Pakistan was rocked by violent protests triggered by the shock arrest of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, the Pakistani rupee was crashed against the US dollar in interbank market on Wednesday. According to the information received from the forex dealers, at the start of the business the local currency resisted pressure from the greenback but by the noon it crumbled, losing Rs3.55 in its value. The US dollar was currently being traded at Rs288.50. During the last three business days, the greenback had been appreciated by Rs4.91 in value against the Pakistani rupee. On Tuesday, the Pakistani rupee had sustained losses against the US dollar, settling with a depreciation of 0.35%. The local currency closed at 284.84, a decrease of 99 paise. In a related development, Moody's Investor Service warned that Pakistan could default without an IMF bailout, as the country faces uncertain financing options beyond June, according to Bloomberg. "We consider that Pakistan will meet its external payments for the remainder of this fiscal year ending in June," Grace Lim, a sovereign analyst with the ratings company in Singapore, was quoted as saying by Bloomberg. - DNA

Battles shake Sudan's capital as power struggle escalates

KHARTOUM: Fighting in Sudan's capital escalated on Wednesday with fierce clashes and air strikes, witnesses said, as delegations of rival military factions continued talks in Saudi Arabia aimed at securing a ceasefire and humanitarian relief. Residents reported ground battles in several neighbourhoods of Khartoum between the army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), as well as heavy gunfire in the north of Omdurman and the east of Bahri, two adjacent cities separated from Khartoum by the River Nile. The army has been pounding targets across the three cities since Tuesday as it tries to root out RSF forces that have taken control of large residential areas and strategic sites since early in the conflict that erupted on April 15. "There's been heavy air strikes and RPG fire since 6:30 a.m.", said Ahmed, a resident of the Bahri neighbourhood of Shambat. "We're lying on the ground and there are people living near us who ran to the Nile to protect themselves there under the embankment." The conflict has created a humanitarian crisis in Africa's third-largest nation by area, displacing more than 700,000 people inside the country and prompting 150,000 to flee to neighbouring states. It has also sparked unrest in Sudan's western Darfur region. The U.N. World Food Programme said that up to 2.5 million more Sudanese were expected to fall into hunger in the coming months because of the conflict, raising the number of people suffering acute food insecurity to 19 million. Army and RSF delegations have been meeting since the end of last week in talks sponsored by the United States and Saudi Arabia in the Saudi Red Sea port city of Jeddah. Negotiations aim to secure an effective truce and allow access for aid workers and supplies after repeated ceasefire announcements failed to stop the fighting. - Agencies

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Ukraine says Russian brigade flees Bakhmut outskirts

DNA

KYIV: A Ukrainian military unit said on Wednesday it had routed a Russian infantry brigade from territory near Bakhmut, claiming to confirm an account by the head of Russia's Wagner private army that the Russian forces had fled. Moscow has not commented on the reports from either side that its 72nd Separate Motor-rifle Brigade had abandoned its positions on the southwestern outskirts of Bakhmut. The Russian ministry of defence did not immediately reply to a request from Reuters for comment, and Reuters could not independently confirm the situation in the area. A Russian brigade is typically formed of several thousand troops. The eastern Ukrainian city has been the primary target of Moscow's huge winter offensive and scene of the bloodiest ground combat in Europe since World War Two. Russian mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has repeatedly accused Moscow's regular armed forces of failing to adequately support his private army that led the fight in Bakhmut, said on Tuesday that the Russian brigade had abandoned its positions. "Our army is fleeing. The 72nd

Brigade pissed away three square km this morning, where I had lost around 500 men," Prigozhin said. In a statement overnight, Ukraine's Third Separate Assault Brigade said: "It's official. Prigozhin's report about the flight of Russia's 72nd Independent Motorized Rifle Brigade from near Bakhmut and the '500 corpses' of Russians left behind is true." "The Third Assault Brigade is grateful for the publicity about our success at the front." Early on Wednesday the unit, formed from Ukraine's nationalist Azov Battalion, reposted a video of one of Azov's founders, Andriy Biletsky, who said his forces had "defeated" the Russian brigade. "In fact, the 6th and 7th squadrons of this brigade were almost entirely destroyed, brigade intelligence was destroyed, large number of fighting vehicles were destroyed, a considerable number of prisoners were taken," he said. "The attacks were implemented within a territory 3 km wide and 2.6 km deep, and this entire territory is completely liberated from the Russian occupying forces." Ukraine's General Staff, which typically withholds such detail from its regular reports, gave no specific account of fighting in the area, apart from saying that Russia had "conducted an unsuccessful offensive in the city of Bakhmut".