

QUETTA VOICE

Asif Durrani has
thorough knowledge and
understanding of region

Brother of Qasim
Suri condemns May
9th incidents

In a major blow to PTI,
Asad Umar steps down as
General Secretary

Fawad Chaudhary says
farewell to PTI

Dawood Ahmed

ISLAMABAD In a
major blow to the former
ruling party i.e. Pakistan
Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI),
Asad Umar stepped down
as the Secretary General
and the member of the
Core Committee. Asad
was considered to be a
close aide of the former
prime minister Imran
Khan.

PTI leader
clarifies he has
not abandoned
party, says
decision
voluntary and
not influenced
by any
'external
pressure'

In another significant
setback to former prime
minister Imran Khan,
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
(PTI) Secretary General
Asad Umar
has announced stepping
down from all party positions
shortly after he was
released from Adiala Jail.
He announced his deci-



Asad Umar

sion during a press
conference at National Press
Club in Islamabad on
Wednesday.
'Not possible for me to
lead party under these
circumstances. I am resigning
as Secretary General and
core committee member of
PTI,' he said while
addressing the press
conference. Responding to
a question, Umar clarified
that he has not left PTI but
only resigned as the secre-

Imran Khan himself
has best explained the army's
status in Pakistan. He said
that we would have seen
similar fate like Syria's if it
was not for a strong army
like ours. Khan said that
my country needs my army
more than me.

He said that the inci-
dents of May 9 are not only
condemnable, but also a
point to ponder on where
we have come. 'I feel like
there should be transparent
investigation against those
involved in these incidents.
But thousands of PTI
workers and supporters
were arrested, a lot of them
are innocent... it is also
important that they are
released as soon as possi-

Dawood Ahmed

ISLAMABAD
Former federal minister
information, Fawad
Chaudhary said in a
statement to Pakistan
Tehreek e Insaaf
(PTI) on Wednesday.

In another blow to the
former ruling party,
Fawad Chaudhary parted
his ways with the former
ruling party.
'[With] reference to
my earlier statement
where I unequivocally
condemned 9th May inci-

dents, I have decided to
take a break from politics,
therefore, I have resigned
from party position and
parting ways from Imran
Khan,' he wrote on his
official Twitter handle.

In another major blow
to Pakistan Tehreek-e-
Insaf (PTI), senior politi-
cian and former federal
minister Chaudhary Fawad
Hussain on Wednesday
parted ways with the
former ruling party and its
chairman Imran Khan.

'[With] reference to
my earlier statement
where I unequivocally
condemned 9th May inci-



Fawad Chaudhary

So far Dr Shireen
Mazari, Fayyazul Hassan
Chohan, Malik Amin
Aslam, Mahmood
Mouli, Amir Kavani, Jai
Prakash, Aftab Siddiqui
and Anjay Gangwani
among many others have
left Imran Khan's party.

Shireen, while speak-
ing to the media in
Islamabad on Tuesday,
announced that she was
not only leaving the party
but also saying goodbye
to active politics, saying
that her health and daugh-
ter Imran Mazari suffered
significantly during her
12-day incarceration.

'I am leaving politics
because of my children,
family and health issues.
My family and children
are my first priority,' she
said. 'I have condemned
the events that took place
on May 9 and 10. I have
condemned all forms of
disorder.'

'Forced divorces'
Though PTI Chairman
Imran sees this exodus as
'forced divorces at
'gunpoint', political
experts suggest that it's
an attempt to factionalise
the PTI just like the
PML-N was converted
into PML-Q overnight at
the turn of the last centu-

ry.
'Without beating
around the bush, this is
obviously the result of
pressure coming from the
establishment. The govern-
ment is simply fanning
it,' former PPP sena-
tor Mustafa Nawaz
Khokhar said.
Khokhar had himself
paid the price of contin-
uously speaking up on
human rights violations,
especially of the PTI
leaders, before being
asked to leave the PPP.
He said that the current
practice of pressuring
politicians to leave polit-

Construction of separate waiting rooms for women in
Balochistan prisons reviewed

Sheikh Razaq

QUETTA In pursuance of the Supreme
Court of Pakistan's directive, a special
consultative meeting was held in the
Ministry of Law Balochistan to review reforms in
the prisons of Balochistan.
Parliamentary Secretary Law and
Parliamentary Affairs, Science and
Information Technology Dr. Rubaba
Khan Buledi chaired the meeting while IG
prisons Balochistan Malik Shireen Kaso
Superintendent Central Jail Quetta
Muhammad Ishaq Zahri, Deputy
Superintendent Naushin Staff Officer Asad
Khan, Senior Medical Officer Dr. Munir
Ahmed Mengal, Chairperson Provincial
Commission on Status of Women
Balochistan Farida Shahzad, Director
Parliamentary Affairs Saeed Iqbal Khan
were also present.



Besides discussed issues pertaining to
the establishment of funds, construction of
separate waiting rooms for women in all
jails of the province, special vans for the
transportation of women prisoners,
appointment of doctors on vacant posts of

medical officers in jails, fixed daily
allowance for prison staff.

Prisons staff to
be provided
necessary
training;
Dr. Rubaba

it is essential to provide necessary training
to the prison staff including basic facilities
regarding laws and human rights awareness.

Solution of
prisoners' issues
a top priority: Dr.
Rubaba

Along with the provision of facilities to
the prisoners, attention must also be given
to solving the problems and providing pro-
fessional training of the prison staff.
She stressed that we might not bring
reforms over night but we can gradually
move towards improvement through con-
tinuous reforms.
Dr. Rubaba suggested that a consultative
body should be established to continue the
measures related to prison reforms, so that
it may yield fair-reaching results.

Asif Durrani has thorough knowledge and
understanding of region

Syed Ali Shah

QUETTA Pakistan's special envoy to
Afghanistan, Asif Durrani has thorough knowl-
edge and understanding of the region. Born and
raised in Quetta, Mr. Durrani has the best under-
standing of issues relating to Afghanistan, Iran,
India, China and Gulf States.
In view of Durrani's strong credentials and
diplomatic career, Prime Minister Shehbaz
Sharif appointed him as Pakistan's special envoy
to Afghanistan. Durrani's appointment has come
after the connecting the landlocked Afghanistan
and the Central Asian States with the China-
Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
Since retirement, Mr. Durrani has been in the
forefront on national and international media to
promote national interest and principled stance
of Pakistan in the region and around the globe.



Durrani is a former
diplomat and journalist

Asif Durrani is a former diplomat. He has
served as Pakistan's ambassador to Afghanistan,
Iran, Abu Dhabi, UAE, Deputy High

Commissioner/Minister for Pakistan in London.
Born and raised in Quetta, Mr. Durrani has also
worked as a journalist in Daily Muslim
Correspondent in Quetta and in the Balochistan
Times. Durrani also got his education in Quetta.

Durrani's appointment
comes after resignation
of Sadiq Khan

With his extensive diplomatic background, Mr
Durrani is expected to play a crucial role in
strengthening bilateral relations between
Pakistan and Afghanistan. The appointment of a
special representative for Afghanistan, became
pretextary for the resignation of Sadiq Khan.
During his three-year tenure, Mr. Khan worked
diligently to address the complex and evolving
issues between the two neighboring countries.

Brother of Qasim
Suri condemns May
9th incidents

Manan Mandokhail

QUETTA Muhammad Hashim Suri, the younger brother of former
deputy speaker national assembly, Qasim Suri has strongly condemned
unlawful incidents on May 9th across the country. Addressing a press
conference at Quetta Press Club on Wednesday, Hashim Suri also
parted his ways with the former ruling party i.e. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI).
'We strongly condemn such incidents,' Mr. Suri said. He informed the
journalists that his brother, the former deputy speaker national assembly
Qasim Suri was in Islamabad. He clarified that Bilal Suri, his another
brother had no political affiliation and that only Qasim Suri was affiliat-

'We do not believe in
violent politics and promote
peace', Hashim Suri

'We do not believe in violent politics and promote peace', Hashim Suri
said. He said some elements had inflicted damages to public and pri-
vate across the country. 'This was unacceptable,' Hashim Suri said. He
urged all political parties to join hands for the stability of the motherland.
Hashim Suri's press conference has come a days after the Balochistan
Minister for Industries, Mobeen Khilji parted his ways with the former
ruling party i.e. the PTI. Khilji who belonged to the PTI had also strongly
condemned the May 9th incidents and resigned from the PTI.



Younger brother of Qasim Suri addressing a press conference at
Quetta Press Club. Photo provided by the author.

Imran announces forming committee to
talk to 'anyone in power'

LAHORE Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)
Chairman Imran Khan has reiterated that he
would step back from his position if people
power can convince his party that it would be
beneficial for Pakistan.
Addressing his supporters through video link
from his Zaman Park residence in Lahore on
Wednesday, the former prime minister said he
would give another chance to dialogue and con-
stitute a committee, on Thursday (tomorrow),
to deliberate with those who have power in the
country.
Despite sincere effort, we are unable to
understand how Pakistan will benefit if elections
are held in October. Even I am ready to get misus-
ed from politics if they convince my team that it
will benefit the country,' Imran maintained.
The PTI chief said judges of the Supreme
Court of Pakistan are the last hope of Pakistani
nation. Democracy is being dismantled in the
country, he said, adding that the Constitution of
Pakistan has been breached after May 14. 'There



Imran Khan

Khan said, though night is dark but you have
to face this with courage and patience. 'I am ready
to see anything but will remain standing till the
last ball. I know this darkness cannot stay long.
I am not willing to surrender and accepting the
same from my workers and supporter,' he said
and added it would be better to die for freedom
than accepting slavery.
Khan pointed out that fundamental rights
have been suspended in the country. 'Over 10,000
workers of my party have been put behind bars.
Around 25 have embraced martyrdom while
hundreds are suffering from bullet injuries in
hospitals. Even the prisoners of war have some
fundamental right but PTI workers have none on
pretext of acting on the Command of Honour in
Lahore,' he lamented. He questioned why cham-
pions of human right in the country are silent
over ongoing fascism. 'Why media is silent over
current atrocities. Today, it is happening with
PTI tomorrow it will happen with others; no one
will remain safe. INP

Gender budgeting-a goal for gender removing inequalities

Editor Asim Khan

Flaws in the Balochistan census

Flaws have been witnessed in the seventh census underway in Pakistan's Balochistan province. The census is underway amid reservations and apprehensions expressed by the Baloch and Pashtoon nationalist political parties.

The census staff is yet to reach the population in urban parts of the province. What to speak about the remote areas of the province, which covers half of the country in terms of area and houses only 6% population of entire Pakistan.

Census staff is yet to reach the population in Balochistan
Specific law and order situations, rugged mountains, long distances, and administrative issues make it very difficult to make sure proper and accurate counting of all individuals in Balochistan.

As per the 2017 national census, Balochistan makes hardly 6% population of the entire country. Indeed, this is equal to salt in the flour. It is ironic that if this meager population is not counted properly during the census of 2023.

Census also a sensitive topic in Balochistan
Like in some cities of Pakistan, census/enumeration is also considered to be one of the sensitive topics in Balochistan. Almost all political parties are skeptical about the process of the current enumeration/census.

The Baloch nationalist parties are concerned about the inclusion of Afghan refugees in the census process and fear that this would bring a demographic change in Balochistan. Similarly, the Pashtoon nationalist parties fear that their (ethnic Pashtuns) population should not be ignored under the garb of Afghan refugees.

Balochistan makes up only 6% population of the entire country
The resource-rich province of Balochistan has a nominal representation in the parliament with only 11 members. It has a total of 342. The province has no say in the formation of the federal government, and distribution of development funds under the federal public sector development program (PSPD). Even its (Balochistan) meager share of 6% percent in services is swallowed by Islamabad through fake domiciles.

Balochistan is lagging behind all other provinces in terms of key social indicators including education, health, sanitation and clean drinking water. Nevertheless, its funds are not utilized in a transparent way because of the worst governance.

To be precise, all political parties should put their heads together and bury the hatchet and come up with one point agenda that a fair and transparent census should be conducted before it is already late.



Mehfooz Ali Khan

Article 25 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan says that there will be no discrimination on the basis of sex. It means that the rights of men and women should be equal. Gender equality is a basic fundamental right in any self-respecting democracy. Do ground realities substantiate this assertion? Are there even playing grounds for both genders? If not, why is it so? And how can gender mainstreaming be achieved? Gender Responsive, Gender Sensitive and Gender Aware budgeting.

There are many policy options to reduce this imbalance but budgeting is important as a policy and planning instrument

for governments that can be used for reaching the goal of Gender Equality. Gender Responsive, Gender Sensitive and Gender Aware budgeting in a country, region, or a project means to create enabling environment to bring equality? The fundamental objective of gender budgeting refers to refining budget and related policies with a view to promoting gender equality as an integral part of human rights. Gender budgeting makes the gender-specific effects of budgets visible and raises awareness about their frequently implicit dimensions of discrimination against women.

Gender impacts of budgets and policies. Gender budgeting thus identifies the gender-specific effects of public finance - which is usually presented as gender-neutral. Gender budgeting is therefore regarded as a core strategy to increase awareness and understanding of gender issues and the gender impacts of budgets and policies. When

we talk in the context of Balochistan, the first question that strikes us is that: 'Is there any study ever conducted to find out the Gender Gap? Did we undertake any post or pre-budget assessment of the annual budget on different segments of the society, especially women, who form almost 50% (48.76%, to be specific) of our national population? In Balochistan, this ratio is 47.47%. If our budget is not Gender Sensitive, almost 50% of the population is left out. In our set up, women empowerment starts and ends with the provision of Sewing Machines, the opening of embroidery centers, and the holding of cultural shows. It means a gender-based assessment of the budget incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process, from revenues and expenditures is required in order to promote gender equality. The current female population in Balochistan is 47.4% and the needs are completely ignored at

all levels and they are hardly involved in the budgetary process. An analysis of PSDPs since 2013-14 till 2020-21 shows that there was not a single project in the years 2013-14, 1st 2014-15, as the women did not. Exist or they were not worthy of any consideration. Then from 2016 to 2019-20, there were one to three projects and the total cost invested from 12% to 22%. It shows how much priority that 47.49% of the population gets in the province. Although the world over women is not categorized as a vulnerable group.

In Balochistan, they are not only vulnerable for the welfare of the female workers. They lack the capacity to formulate and implement the policies. Conditions outside the capital city are simply deplorable. Economic Report of the UN shows that compared to men, women have 20% fewer chances of employment, and another 20% of the women labor force works in unregulated sector of the economy. Why they are consi-

ered vulnerable because they are solely dependent on male counterparts both home as well as at the work place. Surprisingly there are no separate Rest Rooms/Washrooms for ladies in Secretariat and directorates. For the entire female population, there are only one female park in Smugli Road and they have no recreational facilities whatsoever.

Women development department manned by male officers. There is a women's Department, mostly manned by male officers and workers, who are supposed to work for the welfare of the female workers. They lack the capacity to formulate and implement the policies. Conditions outside the capital city are simply deplorable. Economic Report of the UN shows that compared to men, women have 20% fewer chances of employment, and another 20% of the women labor force works in unregulated sector of the economy. Why they are consi-

The Iran-Saudi pact, Mirror, mirror on the wall...

By Abdul Sattar

By Kamila Hyat

The recent rapprochement between Iran and Saudi Arabia has created a ripple of excitement among the people of the region, who have been badly affected by the undeclared cold war between the two countries.

It is expected that peace and stability in the region from Riyadh in the Middle East will be instrumental in putting an end to the propaganda war unleashed by the media outlets of the two states. The people of the region and the people of the two states closer.

The easing of tensions could greatly benefit the Iranian economy that has been crippled because of the ruthless sanctions imposed by the US and its allies. This recent rapprochement was also partly fueled by the precarious economic situation that has plunged millions of people into a life of misery and hardship.

These sanctions dealt a severe blow to Iranian economy, especially in the oil sector, which is the backbone of its economy. The loss of billions of dollars over the years have about one and another.

The US and its European allies tried to isolate Iran at the national level, which also damaged the country's diplomatic relations. Enemies of Iran used this unrest to tarnish the image of the country, assuring that Tehran is no different from a fascist state.

The normalization of ties perhaps will not instantly end Iranian isolation at the international level, but help Tehran find some support at regional forums.

While sanctions against Iran are likely to continue, making it difficult for Tehran to get any relief at the global level, it can enhance Iranian share in regional trade and economic cooperation. The kingdom also seems determined to make a pragmatic approach that seems to be promoting regional trade and economic cooperation. The kingdom also seems determined to make a pragmatic approach that seems to be promoting regional trade and economic cooperation.

After the normalization of relations with the UAE, Iran might put aside its differences with Saudi Arabia. It will help boost its image in the region. Iran believes in talks and diplomacy, questioning the Iranian narrative projected by the West. Asserting that the Iranian narrative is a regional dominance by bankrolling proxies across the region.

The rapprochement with Riyadh will also greatly benefit the Iranian economy that has been crippled because of the ruthless sanctions imposed by the US and its allies. This recent rapprochement was also partly fueled by the precarious economic situation that has plunged millions of people into a life of misery and hardship.

Some years, its leadership has adopted a pragmatic approach that seems to be promoting regional trade and economic cooperation. The kingdom also seems determined to make a pragmatic approach that seems to be promoting regional trade and economic cooperation.

These good gestures by the two countries are a welcome sign that the world is finally entering into an era of effective multilateralism. First, Russia stabilized war-torn Syria a few years ago and now China is also creating a similar atmosphere that might go a long way in fostering a more stable and prosperous world.

The rapprochement should serve as a reminder to the belligerent powers that there has been seeking regional domination through military means. The Chinese involvement in the region is also a reminder to the belligerent powers that there has been seeking regional domination through military means.

It has come when we are looking at the magic mirror on the wall higher than the under the mirror, there are really no answers, but the analysis put forward a variety of opinions, some arguing that after three years of the hardship caused by inflation, unemployment and reduced income, the answer is not clear. Much depends on what future government will do to correct the situation.

So, we asked the mirror if everything is lost. The answer is not clear. Much depends on what future government will do to correct the situation. We hope that there will be some sense of responsibility and an attempt to discuss matters together despite the national crisis we are witnessing at the present time. We cannot say how long this will last, but we believe that if the institutions will stay true to the promise of steering clear of corruption and gain friends it has lost over the years due to extremely wise to do so.

Pakistan, according to top economists across the world, has had a default in the IMF the leader of last year's hyperinflation. The situation which led to default. As a result, poverty doubled across the country in 2022. The IMF's latest report says that Pakistan's economic growth has slowed to 1.5% in 2022, the lowest since 2009.

The power and energy crisis is about its power crisis

By Raashid Wali Janjua

By Farrook Saleem

Pakistan's power and energy crisis has reached a critical point. The power sector's circular debt of Rs2,377 billion combined with Rs1,400 billion of the gas sector - and Rs600 billion payable to PSO speak volumes of mismanagement and the unsustainable structure of power-and-energy-sector governance.

Our power sector generation is flawed - a combination of ageing generation, poor transmission and distribution system, poor bill recovery and demand management mechanism.

The failure to plan a balanced energy mix ratio, including an optimal mix of renewables and thermal-based sources has resulted in a disproportionate reliance on thermal-based sources of power generation. The planning failure has also contributed to the present situation.

Supply side planning in Pakistan was predicted on ambitious projections of industrial growth. The lack of industrial development put paid to all optimistic projections of power consumption, resulting in a perennial imbalance between demand and supply. The total installed capacity of 43,775MW in Pakistan is grossly over capacity.

in the cost of power generation, which, for Pakistan, is not passed on to end consumers and keeps piling up in the shape of circular debt. Combined with poor bill recovery and transmission and distribution losses, the IPPs are not satisfactory. On the demand front, Pakistan needs the actual base load of 8,000MW. Due to this, the demand often rises to 30,000MW.

It is safe to say that Pakistan uses costly power generated mostly through imported fossil fuels to cool walls and air conditioning units. This, indeed is an inefficient way of using costly electricity.

Not even in the temporary demand in summer spikes to 30,000MW, the solution is to increase the base load which is avoided to keep constancies happy. There could be a number of solutions to this over-capacity issue, and one of those is to increase our industrial capacity so that the present base load could be taken up by 20,000MW in extreme weather conditions to reduce the adverse impact of electricity.

The present arrangement of spending \$10 billion on capacity pay-

ment term structure reforms through better regulation of the power sector and professional management.

Pakistan needs to enhance its electricity capacity for efficient consumption of its power capacity in addition to better management through administrative measures like weather-friendly houses, installation of smart meters and AMRs, plugging thefts through metered and monitored transmission and distribution system and the gradual altering of energy mix enhancing the share of hydro and renewables like wind and solar energy.

The state of the oil and gas sector is also not enviable. The country has consumed 79.8 per cent and 66 per cent of the oil and gas reserves. With the cheap domestic gas sources drying up fast, Pakistan is expected to run out of domestic natural resources by 2030.

Pakistan is purchasing costly imported natural gas and putting that into 1.8, 0.0 k m - 1.0 n pipeline infrastructure to use it in domestic stoves.

term structure reforms through better regulation of the power sector and professional management.

Pakistan needs to enhance its electricity capacity for efficient consumption of its power capacity in addition to better management through administrative measures like weather-friendly houses, installation of smart meters and AMRs, plugging thefts through metered and monitored transmission and distribution system and the gradual altering of energy mix enhancing the share of hydro and renewables like wind and solar energy.

The state of the oil and gas sector is also not enviable. The country has consumed 79.8 per cent and 66 per cent of the oil and gas reserves. With the cheap domestic gas sources drying up fast, Pakistan is expected to run out of domestic natural resources by 2030.

Pakistan is purchasing costly imported natural gas and putting that into 1.8, 0.0 k m - 1.0 n pipeline infrastructure to use it in domestic stoves.

ment term structure reforms through better regulation of the power sector and professional management.

Pakistan needs to enhance its electricity capacity for efficient consumption of its power capacity in addition to better management through administrative measures like weather-friendly houses, installation of smart meters and AMRs, plugging thefts through metered and monitored transmission and distribution system and the gradual altering of energy mix enhancing the share of hydro and renewables like wind and solar energy.

The state of the oil and gas sector is also not enviable. The country has consumed 79.8 per cent and 66 per cent of the oil and gas reserves. With the cheap domestic gas sources drying up fast, Pakistan is expected to run out of domestic natural resources by 2030.

Pakistan is purchasing costly imported natural gas and putting that into 1.8, 0.0 k m - 1.0 n pipeline infrastructure to use it in domestic stoves.

ment term structure reforms through better regulation of the power sector and professional management.

Pakistan needs to enhance its electricity capacity for efficient consumption of its power capacity in addition to better management through administrative measures like weather-friendly houses, installation of smart meters and AMRs, plugging thefts through metered and monitored transmission and distribution system and the gradual altering of energy mix enhancing the share of hydro and renewables like wind and solar energy.

The state of the oil and gas sector is also not enviable. The country has consumed 79.8 per cent and 66 per cent of the oil and gas reserves. With the cheap domestic gas sources drying up fast, Pakistan is expected to run out of domestic natural resources by 2030.

Pakistan is purchasing costly imported natural gas and putting that into 1.8, 0.0 k m - 1.0 n pipeline infrastructure to use it in domestic stoves.

Our power sector generation is flawed - a combination of ageing generation, poor transmission and distribution system, poor bill recovery and demand management mechanism. The failure to plan a balanced energy mix ratio, including an optimal mix of renewables and thermal-based sources has resulted in a disproportionate reliance on thermal-based sources of power generation. The planning failure has also contributed to the present situation. Supply side planning in Pakistan was predicted on ambitious projections of industrial growth. The lack of industrial development put paid to all optimistic projections of power consumption, resulting in a perennial imbalance between demand and supply. The total installed capacity of 43,775MW in Pakistan is grossly over capacity. While sanctions against Iran are likely to continue, making it difficult for Tehran to get any relief at the global level, it can enhance Iranian share in regional trade and economic cooperation. The kingdom also seems determined to make a pragmatic approach that seems to be promoting regional trade and economic cooperation. After the normalization of relations with the UAE, Iran might put aside its differences with Saudi Arabia. It will help boost its image in the region. Iran believes in talks and diplomacy, questioning the Iranian narrative projected by the West. Asserting that the Iranian narrative is a regional dominance by bankrolling proxies across the region. The rapprochement with Riyadh will also greatly benefit the Iranian economy that has been crippled because of the ruthless sanctions imposed by the US and its allies. This recent rapprochement was also partly fueled by the precarious economic situation that has plunged millions of people into a life of misery and hardship. These sanctions dealt a severe blow to Iranian economy, especially in the oil sector, which is the backbone of its economy. The loss of billions of dollars over the years have about one and another. The US and its European allies tried to isolate Iran at the national level, which also damaged the country's diplomatic relations. Enemies of Iran used this unrest to tarnish the image of the country, assuring that Tehran is no different from a fascist state. The normalization of ties perhaps will not instantly end Iranian isolation at the international level, but help Tehran find some support at regional forums. While sanctions against Iran are likely to continue, making it difficult for Tehran to get any relief at the global level, it can enhance Iranian share in regional trade and economic cooperation. The kingdom also seems determined to make a pragmatic approach that seems to be promoting regional trade and economic cooperation. After the normalization of relations with the UAE, Iran might put aside its differences with Saudi Arabia. It will help boost its image in the region. Iran believes in talks and diplomacy, questioning the Iranian narrative projected by the West. Asserting that the Iranian narrative is a regional dominance by bankrolling proxies across the region. The rapprochement with Riyadh will also greatly benefit the Iranian economy that has been crippled because of the ruthless sanctions imposed by the US and its allies. This recent rapprochement was also partly fueled by the precarious economic situation that has plunged millions of people into a life of misery and hardship. These sanctions dealt a severe blow to Iranian economy, especially in the oil sector, which is the backbone of its economy. The loss of billions of dollars over the years have about one and another. The US and its European allies tried to isolate Iran at the national level, which also damaged the country's diplomatic relations. Enemies of Iran used this unrest to tarnish the image of the country, assuring that Tehran is no different from a fascist state. The normalization of ties perhaps will not instantly end Iranian isolation at the international level, but help Tehran find some support at regional forums. While sanctions against Iran are likely to continue, making it difficult for Tehran to get any relief at the global level, it can enhance Iranian share in regional trade and economic cooperation. The kingdom also seems determined to make a pragmatic approach that seems to be promoting regional trade and economic cooperation. After the normalization of relations with the UAE, Iran might put aside its differences with Saudi Arabia. It will help boost its image in the region. Iran believes in talks and diplomacy, questioning the Iranian narrative projected by the West. Asserting that the Iranian narrative is a regional dominance by bankrolling proxies across the region. The rapprochement with Riyadh will also greatly benefit the Iranian economy that has been crippled because of the ruthless sanctions imposed by the US and its allies. This recent rapprochement was also partly fueled by the precarious economic situation that has plunged millions of people into a life of misery and hardship. These sanctions dealt a severe blow to Iranian economy, especially in the oil sector, which is the backbone of its economy. The loss of billions of dollars over the years have about one and another. The US and its European allies tried to isolate Iran at the national level, which also damaged the country's diplomatic relations. Enemies of Iran used this unrest to tarnish the image of the country, assuring that Tehran is no different from a fascist state. The normalization of ties perhaps will not instantly end Iranian isolation at the international level, but help Tehran find some support at regional forums.

Minister unveils plan to attract foreign, domestic investment in AI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque Wednesday said the incumbent government was working on a strategy to attract more and more foreign as well as domestic investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI), considered a key element in strengthening economies in the modern world.

In a statement, he said, at least 60 countries, including India and Sri Lanka, have adopted the AI laws and policies since 2017.

A minister said Bangladesh's draft policy has recently been opened for public feedback and consultation.

The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication has also uploaded a draft of the Artificial Intelligence Policy (AIP) on its official webpage, seeking public feedback and suggestions from public and private sector organizations, academicians, civil society, and industry to finalize the document.

Artificial Intelligence Policy is a pivotal milestone for transforming Pakistan into a knowledge-based economy as it spells out a national strategy to establish an ecosystem necessary for AI adoption.

The policy will harness an agile framework to address different aspects of unique user journeys encompassing different market horizons and industry verticals by ensuring the responsible use of AI.

The Ministry of I&T is also forming a Policy Committee that will lead the policy consultation process and finalize the draft of the National AI Policy.

The Policy Committee will comprise experts from industry, academia, and government. Ministry of I&T encourages top experts in the field of AI from Industry and Academia to become part of this Policy Committee.

The minister said, to secure the economic future moving forward along with other fields adopting Artificial Intelligence (AI) was indispensable in the current scenario.

"There is no doubt that all major fronts of national power like the economy, security, and military power depend on technological advancement," the minister added.

He said that Pakistan wanted to get its due share of the global Artificial Intelligence (AI) market which is likely to reach US\$ 1 trillion by 2030 INP.



TEXTILA: President Dr Arif Alvi addressing the first convocation of HIITEC Institute of Medical Science.

Pakistani rupee shows some spine against US dollar

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani rupee showed some spine against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday, after sustaining losses for five consecutive sessions.

According to the data made available by the forex dealers, the local currency went up by 40 paise against the greenback and was currently being traded at Rs286.75.

On Tuesday, the Pakistani rupee was depreciated by 0.21% in the interbank market. The currency settled at 287.15, a loss of 59 paise as per the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The gap between open and bank rates has further widened. The Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan reported the closing price of the dollar at Rs305 compared to Rs301 in the previous session.

The rising dollar price gap has created a stir among the stakeholders that the exchange rate could face another shock and the local currency would fall to Rs300 in the interbank.

The financial circles believe that the banks are under pressure from the federal government to open letters of credit for imports without taking the SBP into confidence.

The central bank has been trying to re-open discussions regarding the current account deficit and avoid a default-like situation. However, the political government is increasing pressure on the manufacturing and export sectors to allow imports or face a negative economic growth rate. INP

Class XI physics, chemistry papers leaked in Larkana, Benazirabad

LARKANA, BENAZIRABAD: The Class XI physics and chemistry papers were leaked Wednesday in Larkana and Benazirabad, respectively, before the start of the exams.

The question paper was widely shared in WhatsApp groups before the exam even started.

Besides the paper leakage, the cheating mafia helped the students solve the question paper within minutes through WhatsApp.

The students were to solve the question paper in two hours and 40 minutes.

Similarly, tall claims of the education board about the best arrangements to prevent cheating during exams were dashed to pieces as the Class XI chemistry paper was leaked in Benazirabad district.

The question paper was widely shared in WhatsApp groups before the start of the exam, and the students at the examination centres were seen solving the question paper through cell phones.

Besides, the students taking the exam suffered a great deal of inconvenience and some of them fainted due to the absence of drinking water at the examination centres amid power loadshedding in the hot weather. INP

14-year-old boy burned to death in Gujranwala

GUJRANWALA: Police has confirmed on Wednesday that a charred body of a 14-year-old boy was found at an abandoned ghee mill in Gujranwala.

According to police, after receiving information that a dead body was lying in the premises of forsaken ghee mill, a police team led by the deputy commissioner reached the crime scene and taken the dead body of the boy in custody.

Police and forensic experts collected possible existing evidence. Police found the victim's hands and legs tied and body parts buried.

Police shifted the accused dead body to hospital for autopsy. Police suspected aspect of rape before murder. The body of the victim is yet to be identified. INP

Money-laundering case against Sharifs adjourned

LAHORE: An accountability court in Lahore on Wednesday adjourned the hearing of assets beyond means and money laundering reference against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Hamza Shehbaz until May 32.

The court also approved Hamza Shehbaz's application seeking exemption from hearing for one day.

The court ordered provision of copies of NAB's supplementary investigation report to all the accused.

Earlier, the court disposed of the interim bail petition filed by Haroon Yousaf, son-in-law of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, after the case said he was withdrawing it.

Judge Qamaruz Zaman of the accountability court No. 9 heard the case. Speaking on the occasion, Yousaf, who was hitherto a heard

claimed offender in the case along with another suspect Syed Zahid Naqvi, said that since he had been declared innocent in the National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) supplementary report, he did not require bail in the case.

Co-suspect Naqvi also withdrew the interim bail application. Besides Yousaf and Naqvi, PM Shehbaz is also a suspect in the money laundering case.

The court ordered distribution of supplementary report's copies to 10 suspects in the case.

The judge remarked that now the question was whether other suspects in the case could be indicted. He further said that if proofs were found to be inadequate, the suspects could be set free.

Hamza Shehbaz, son of the prime minister, on the occasion filed an application for exemption from appearance. INP

blinded with freedom the result of the sacrifices of the martyrs.

Wife of Flight Lieutenant Mehmood Ahmed Butt Shaheed said, "As a nation, it is our duty to remember the sacrifices of the martyrs and play our part in national progress."

The daughter of Squadron Leader Muneeruddin Ahmed Shaheed said that the sons of the soil sacrificed their lives to protect the motherland.

"Wife of Wing Commander Numan Akram Shaheed said: "We should remain united and respect the martyrs and should not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the sake of the country."

The brother of Rashid Minhas said: "A martyr never dies and our religion teaches us to respect martyrs. Our nation is ready for any sacrifice." INP

Pakistan doubles daily Covid tests

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has diagnosed another five Covid-19 infections with no fatality despite the same at 30,662 whereas the number of total infections now rose to 1,580,967 after adding the fresh five cases.

During the last 24 hours (Tuesday), 2,190 tests were conducted throughout Pakistan whereas the positivity ratio stood at 0.23%. The number of patients in critical care stood at seven.

India reports 552 new coronavirus cases as recorded 552 new coronavirus infections while the active cases have decreased to 6,591 from 7,104, according to the

Union Health Ministry data updated on Wednesday, reported Indian news agencies.

The death toll has increased to 5,31,849 with six deaths which included three fatalities reported by Kerala, the data updated at 8 am stated.

The Covid case tally was recorded at 449 crore (4,49,87,891). The active cases now comprise 0.01 percent of the total infections and the national Covid-19 recovery rate has been recorded at 98.80 percent, the ministry said.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 4,44,49,451 and the case fatality rate was recorded at 1.18 percent. According to the ministry's website, 220.66 crore doses of Covid vaccine have been administered in the country so far under the nationwide vaccination drive. INP

A brighter future for Pak-China ceramic cooperation: Liza Zhou

ISLAMABAD: There is a brighter future for Pak-China ceramic cooperation, said Liza Zhou, senior sales manager of a top Chinese ceramic brand.

China is a major producer of ceramic, which is famous for its long history and high-end performance. Liza Zhou told Gwadar Post that the quality of their products is now close to that of Italian ceramic tiles, some can even surpass them.

Compared with Pakistani ceramics, the technology and machines of China are better. For example, the technology of gold tile only exists in China or Spain and nowhere in the world," said Muhammad Shahid, CEO of Foshan Urban Ceramics, who has an 18-year ceramic business in China.

Since Pakistan has abundant labor force, raw materials and better international trade environment, Pak-China ceramic cooperation has a great potential.

However, Chinese brands are facing some difficulties in the international market. "At present, the whole industry is facing great pressure in export. There are challenges such as trade barriers. There are competitions with other Chinese enterprises as well as fast emerging producers, such as India and Turkey," said Alfred Huang, assistant to General Manager of Guangdong Marcepolo Ceramics, one of the largest ceramic tile brands in China.

Pakistan's ceramic industry is also facing challenges such as shortage of technology, taxation and rising cost of energy. "If we have better machinery here, there will be better results."

If we have automatic production lines, we can achieve a higher production efficiency," said Mazhar Iqbal, Production Manager at Deen China Ware, Gujranwala.

Pak-China ceramic cooperation can be a solution to above problems, both countries have encountered. Some collaborations in this sector have already begun and are operating in good shape.

"Chinese companies with millions of dollars of investments had set up their factories in Allama Iqbal Industrial Zone (Special Economic Zone Faisalabad set up under CPEC), creating thousands of jobs and boosting ceramics business," said Mian Kashif Ashfaq, a pioneer in establishing Allama Iqbal Industrial City.

During the last two years, nine ceramics units have been established with the assistance of Chinese firms in Faisalabad. Locally-produced ceramics tiles were cost-effective and of good quality.

"With the fast-paced development of the sector, Pakistan can also be able to earn foreign exchange by exporting ceramics," said a spokesperson of the All-Pakistan Ceramic Tiles Manufacturers Association INP.

Girl sold to Rawalpindi beauty parlour recovered by police

RAWALPINDI: A 9-year-old girl sold to a beauty parlour in Rawalpindi by abductors, has been recovered by police.

According to Rawalpindi police, the girl was kidnapped on May 10 from the limits of the airport police station.

She was sold to a beauty parlour located in Rawalpindi's posh area.

She was informed, the police's push area into the area of the abducted girl and arrested two kidnapers in the action, while raids are being conducted to round up the other members of the group.

Rawalpindi police further added that the group involved in the abduction of the children also include cops.

Further investigation has been launched. Earlier, a Station House Officer (SHO) of the Anti-Violent Crime Cell (AVCC) Yusuf Plaza police station in Karachi was found involved in kidnaping for ransom.

According to details, an AVCC team recovered an abducted young girl from the area of Yusuf Plaza police station.

However, SHO Inam Mehmood, allegedly involved in the abduction, fled from the spot. INP

Woman kills stepson for property in Lodhran

LODHARAN: The police have arrested a woman who allegedly killed her 10-year-old stepson in Lodhran. Police confirmed on Wednesday.

According to Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Lodhran, the accused woman poisoned her stepson by giving him poisonous chips and when they were introduced to go completely unconscious. She gave him electric shocks to death. DSP said that when the child did not die with electric shock, the accused strangled him. After the death of the child, his stepmother tried to cover up the incident and took his dead body to hospital for treatment, but the autopsy of the dead body. INP

Crackdown on PTI continues; several leaders' residences raided

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: Amid continuing crackdown on PTI workers, supporters and leadership, the PTI said on Wednesday that residences of many senior leaders including Hamid Azhar, Omar Ayub Khan and Ali Nawaz Azhar were raided overnight.

The PTI also claimed that police had conducted a raid at party's Islamabad region president Ali Nawaz Azhar house.

Separately, PTI leader Omar Ayub alleged that the Islamabad Police raided and searched his house without a warrant, abducted his staff and threatened to arrest his son.

This is the level this imported government is stooping too low," he tweeted.

Meanwhile, condemning the re-arrest and 'custodial torture' of PTI leaders, PTI workers, supporters, party chief Inam Khan vowed to 'resist till my last breath'.

"The constitution is being brazenly violated along with SC (Supreme Court) rulings. Police are being used to crush PTI, our leaders forced to quit the party," he further said in a tweet, adding that "giving into this cruelty means the death of our nation".

In the PTI Islamabad's Twitter handle, the party asserted that during a raid former federal minister Hamid Azhar's 82-year-old father was threatened and a warning was given that his daughter would be 'whisked away' if his son didn't surrender to the police.

The PTI also claimed that police had conducted a raid at party's Islamabad region president Ali Nawaz Azhar house. INP

Omar Ayub Khan's house raided in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: Police raided the house of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Additional Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan in Islamabad on Tuesday night, sources said.

According to family sources, Omar Ayub Khan was not in the house at the time of police raid.

They claimed that police arrested three employees from the house.

It may be noted that police have arrested several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders and workers following the May 9 violence that was triggered after the arrest of the former prime minister in the Al-Qadir Trust corruption case.

Earlier on Tuesday, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Musarrat Jamsheed Cheema were rearrested from outside Adiala Jail after the IHC had ordered their release in his informal media talk, Qureshi said. "I am not leaving the party. I am with the party, and I will stay with the party." INP

Earlier on Tuesday, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Musarrat Jamsheed Cheema were rearrested from outside Adiala Jail after the IHC had ordered their release in his informal media talk, Qureshi said. "I am not leaving the party. I am with the party, and I will stay with the party." INP