

GRAFT CASE

Pakistan indicts
jailed Imran
Khan, wife

REUTERS, Islamabad

A Pakistani court indicted jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his third wife Bushra Bibi yesterday on charges that they allegedly received land as a bribe by misusing his office during his premiership, his party said.

The latest charges follow a string of convictions against Khan in the months leading up to the February 8 national election, where his supporters won the most seats overall. Khan, 71, has been in jail since August in connection with other cases, and has previously denied the allegations.

He had already been convicted in four cases with sentences of as much as 14 years in prison - including two on graft charges, that also disqualified him from taking part in politics for 10 years. His trials are being held on a jail's premises on security grounds. The couple pleaded not guilty to the indictment charges, Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party said.

Candidates backed by the PTI won the largest number of seats in parliament in the election earlier this month by defying all odds and what it says was a military backed crackdown. His supporters ran as independents instead of as a single bloc after his party was barred from the polls.

But his opposition parties led by the Sharif and Bhutto dynasties cobbled together an alliance to form a minority coalition government.

The latest indictment is related to Al-Qadir Trust, which is a non-governmental welfare organization set up by Khan and his third wife Bushra Bibi in 2018 when he was still in office.

Prosecutors say the trust was a front for Khan to receive a valuable 60 acres (24 hectares) of land in a district outside Islamabad and another large piece of land close to Khan's hilltop mansion in the capital as a bribe from a real estate developer, Malik Riaz Hussain, who is one of Pakistan's richest and most powerful businessmen.

Hussain, who hasn't appeared before an anti graft agency to submit his reply to summons issued to him late last year, has denied any wrongdoing.

The PTI condemned the indictment.



Palestinians search the rubble of their house which was destroyed in an overnight Israeli air strike in the Rafah refugee camp in the southern Gaza Strip yesterday. PHOTO: AFP

What do children eat
IN GAZA?

REUTERS, Deir al Balah, Gaza Strip

After surviving on bitter loaves made from animal feed instead of proper flour, three young brothers who fled their home in Gaza City for a tent further south were tucking into a tub of halawa, a sweet crumbly paste.

Seraj Shehada, 8, and his brothers Ismail, 9, and Saad, 11, said they had run away in secret to take refuge with their aunt in her tent in Deir al Balah, central Gaza, because there was nothing to eat in Gaza City.

"When we were in Gaza City, we used to eat nothing. We would eat every two days," said Seraj Shehada, speaking as the three boys ate the halawa straight out of the tub, with a spoon.

"We would eat bird and donkey food, just anything," he said, referring to loaves made from grains and seeds meant for animal consumption. "Day after day, not this food."

Food shortages have been a problem across the Palestinian enclave since

the October 7 start of conflict, but are particularly acute in northern Gaza, where aid deliveries have been rarer for longer.

Some of the few aid trucks to reach the north have been mobbed by desperate, hungry crowds, while aid workers have reported seeing people thin and visibly starving with sunken eyes.

In central Gaza, the situation is marginally better, but still far from easy.

At Al-Nuseirat refugee camp, just north of Deir al Balah, Warda Mattar, a displaced mother sheltering in a school with her two-month-old baby, was giving him a date wrapped in gauze to suck on, for lack of any milk.

"My son is supposed to have milk as a newborn, be it natural milk or formula milk, but I wasn't able to get him milk, because there is no milk in Gaza," said Mattar.

"I resorted to dates to keep my son quiet," she said.

In the tent in Deir al-Balah, the three brothers said they had lost their mother,

another brother and several aunts in the war. They were left with their father and grandmother, and almost nothing to eat apart from loaves made from animal feed, said the eldest brother, Saad Shehada.

"It was bitter. We didn't want to eat it. We were forced to eat it, one small loaf every two days," he said, adding that they drank salty water and got sick, and there was no way to wash themselves or their clothes.

"We secretly came to Deir al-Balah. We did not tell our father," he said.

The boys' aunt, Eman Shehada, was caring for them as best she could. Heavily pregnant, she said she had lost her husband in the war and was left alone with her daughter, a toddler.

"I am not getting the nutrition needed, so I feel tired and dizzy," she said.

She cannot afford even to buy a kilo of potatoes.

"I don't know how to manage our affairs with these three kids, my daughter, and I am pregnant, I can give birth at any moment."

DENGUE OUTBREAK

Peru declares
health emergency

REUTERS, Lima

Peru declared a health emergency across most of the country on Monday as a heat wave and heavy rains have led to a spike in dengue fever cases. The South American nation's death toll due to the virus has risen to 32 so far this year, Health Minister Cesar Vasquez said. Total cases also climbed to 31,300 in the first eight weeks of the year, Vasquez said, up from 24,981 in the first seven weeks. The Peruvian government's cabinet approved the motion to declare a health emergency, Vasquez told journalists, hours after he said a dengue outbreak was "imminent." "There are 20 regions (out of 25) that will be declared in a health emergency due to dengue," Vasquez said in an earlier interview on local radio station RPP. The declaration boosts resources to health responders in the affected areas.

ANTI-WAR CAMPAIGN

Russia jails veteran
activist Orlov

REUTERS, Moscow



Veteran Russian rights activist Oleg Orlov was sentenced to 2-1/2 years in prison yesterday for "discrediting the armed forces" by protesting against the war in Ukraine and accusing President Vladimir Putin of leading a descent into fascism. Orlov, a leader of the rights group Memorial that won a share of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2022, was charged after taking part in anti-war demonstrations and writing an article entitled "They wanted fascism. They got it." "The verdict showed that my article was accurate and true," Orlov, 70, said as he was led away in handcuffs after being sentenced. He was applauded by supporters in the Moscow courtroom, including representatives from Western embassies. Memorial, founded in 1989, has defended freedom of speech and documented human rights abuses from the time of Soviet leader Josef Stalin to the present. After being designated as a "foreign agent", it was banned and dissolved in Russia in 2021. The prosecution said Orlov had shown "political hatred of Russia". In his closing remarks to the trial, he decried the "strangulation of freedom" in the country, which he referred to as a "dystopia".

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১২০ হর্স পাওয়ার



ডাবল কম্প্রেশার এসি

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