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Prime Minister Imran Khan concerned at Russia-Ukraine row

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Briefs

Pak wants to enhance ties with US

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said Pakistan wants to further enhance bilateral cooperation

with the United States in various fields particularly trade and economy. Talking to Ambassador designate to the USA Sardar Masood Khan, in Islamabad, he said the government is focussing on the geo-economics and there was a need to explore further areas of cooperation to enhance bilateral trade and Foreign Direct Investments from the USA.

US 'certainly aware' of Khan's visit

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US State Department Spokesperson Ned Price on Wednesday said the US had communicated its position regarding Russia's "renewed invasion of Ukraine" to Pakistan, adding that it was the responsibility of every country to "voice objection" to Russian President Vladimir Putin's plans. He was responding to a question during a briefing. "We've communicated to Pakistan our position regarding Russia's renewed invasion of Ukraine," Price said, according to a transcript available on the State Department website.

Fawad hails Noor case verdict

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain cited the Noor Mukadam case as an example of what almost every citizen wanted from the judicial system of Pakistan.

Police and prosecution fulfilled their responsibility and the court handed down the verdict within four months, he tweeted. "This is the justice that Pakistani people expect," he added. The minister expressed hope that institutes associated with the administration of justice would live up to the expectations.

Ukraine claims downed five Russian planes, helicopter Russia invades Ukraine

Russian President Vladimir Putin warned the outer world to keep away from the conflict otherwise it has to face the music as well; Russia says destroyed more than 70 military targets in Ukraine; Russia faces worldwide condemnation

NEWS DESK / DNA

KYIV: Russia, at the midnight of February 23, launched military operation against Ukraine targeting mainly the military installations in some parts of Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin in his speech on national hook-up announced launching of the attack. He warned the outer world to keep away from the conflict otherwise it has to face the music as well. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian military claimed on Thursday to have downed five Russian planes and a helicopter in the east of the country near a rebel-held enclave. "According to the Joint Forces Command, today, February 24, in the area of the Joint Forces operation, five planes and a helicopter

Biden speaks with Ukraine's Zelensky

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Joe Biden spoke with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky late Wednesday night in Washington, the White House said, with the US president vowing "support and assistance." The conversation came soon after Russia launched an attack on Ukraine overnight, with explosions heard in multiple parts of the country. "We will continue to provide support and assistance to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people," Biden said in a statement. Biden condemned the



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No plans to send troops in Ukraine: NATO

BRUSSELS: NATO is activating its "defence plans" for allied countries as Russia attacks non-NATO member Ukraine, alliance chief Jens Stoltenberg told a media conference on Thursday. Stoltenberg also confirmed that NATO will hold a video summit on Friday to discuss the Russian invasion of its pro-Western neighbour. And he reiterated that NATO had no "plans" to send alliance troops to Ukraine. It is the first time the alliance has publicly said it is activating its defence plans, which were drawn up after Russia's 2014 invasion and annexation of

Ukraine's Crimea peninsula. Stoltenberg did not give details of them beyond saying they are "defensive plans" allowing deployments that "cover the whole east of our alliance" and which "give our military commanders some more authority within politically defined guidelines". Later, in a joint statement following a virtual meeting Thursday, the leaders of the G7 said Russian President Vladimir Putin has "re-introduced war to the European continent." "He has put himself on

Continued on Page 06

PM Imran concerned at Russia-Ukraine row

Meets with President Putin; says matter could resolve through diplomatic means

CENTRELINE REPORT

MOSCOW: Prime Minister Imran Khan had a Summit meeting with President Vladimir V. Putin in the Kremlin, today. The two leaders held wide-ranging consultations on bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of mutual interest. Recalling the telephone conversations during the recent months between the two leaders, the Prime Minister expressed confidence that the positive trajectory of bilateral relations will continue to move forward in the



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin received Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

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Security forces kill seven terrorists

A huge cache of ammunition was also recovered in two separate operations

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The security forces conducted two separate operations in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and killed at least seven terrorists, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement on Thursday. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, security forces launched an operation in the Hamzoni general area of North Waziristan district after receiving reports of terrorists hiding therein. The ISPR said that during the intense exchange of fire, six

terrorists were killed. The terrorists have been identified as Muhammad Ali, Mateeullah, Muhammad Umar, Akhtar Hussain, Sher, and Waseem. The military's media wing added that weapons, ammunition, and other equipment were also recovered from the hide-out of the slain terrorists. Ammunition recovered included submachine guns, hand grenades, mines, handcuffs, and a large number of multiple calibre rounds. "The killed terrorists were involved in terrorist activities against security

Continued on Page 06

PM lays wreath at Russia's war memorial

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday laid a wreath at 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier', a war memorial dedicated to the Soviet troops fallen during World War II. The prime minister, who arrived in the Russian capital on Wednesday, visited the memorial at the Kremlin Wall and paid his respects to the soldiers. The national anthems of Pakistan and Russia were played on the occasion as the prime minister observed a moment of silence in respect for the fallen troops. After a span of two decades, this is the first visit by a Pakistani prime minister to Russia. - APP

Zahir awarded death penalty in Noor case

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The trial court on Thursday awarded death penalty to prime accused Zahir Jaffer in Noor Mukadam murder case. Jaffer's two household employees were also given a sentence of 10-year imprisonment.

The court acquitted all the other persons nominated in the case, including Zahir's parents, owner and employees of the Therapyworks. Noor Mukadam's father Shaukat Mukadam expressed satisfaction with an Islamabad court's verdict that handed death penalty to the prime accused, Zahir Jaffer, in the case of the brutal murder of his daughter last year in July. Speaking to the media following the pronouncement of the judgement, Shaukat Mukadam said, "an exemplary punishment has been handed to the prime accused." "It was a question of all

The court acquitted all the other persons nominated in the case, including Zahir's parents, owner and employees of the Therapyworks

of Pakistan's daughters. I hoped that I will get justice and I got it," Noor Mukadam Father added, thanking the media for keeping the matter "alive". He said everyone was praying for justice. "The entire nation and world were with us," he said. Additional District and Sessions Judge Justice Atta Rabbani announced the verdict.

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UEFA to move UCL final after Russian invasion - Page 06

Importance of human rights in EU relations with Pakistan - Page 07

UN chief warns Russian actions could devastate - Page 08

Uzbek envoy lauds Pakistan's role in regional peace, stability

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Uzbekistan Aybek Arif Usmanov Thursday called on Chief of Army Staff

(COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa here at GHQ and appreciated Pakistan's role in regional stability. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral cooperation



RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Uzbekistan Aybek Arif Usmanov Thursday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa here at GHQ. - DNA

between the two countries were discussed, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) media release. Speaking on the occasion, the COAS said Pakistan valued its relations with Uzbekistan particularly defence cooperation. They reiterated the desire to further enhance bilateral relations including efforts for peace and security in the region.

The visiting dignitary pledged to keep working for better relations between two brotherly countries. Earlier this week, Adviser on Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood announced that President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev will pay a visit to Pakistan on the second and third of the next month. He was talking to the media along with the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan Sardor Umurzakov.

Estd. 1860

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Briefs

Driving permits facility to restore in FCCI

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: On the special directive of the City Police Officer (CPO) Ghulam Mubashir Mekan the facility of issuing driving permits is being restored in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) to facilitate the business community. Mr. Imran Mahmood Sheikh Senior Vice President FCCI said that traffic police staff has already been deputed and arrangements are being made to make Police Khidmat Markaz fully functional. He hoped that it would become operational within the next couple of days. "Initially it will issue learners driving permits while in later stage driving licenses and their renewal facility would also be extended to the FCCI members", he said and added that the arrangements are being completed on fast-track basis as the general public could also avail this facility in addition to the FCCI members.

Sania Nishtar inaugurates Ehsas Shelter Home

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar inaugurated Ehsas Shelter Home at Charsadda Road here on Thursday. Accompanied by Managing Director Pakistan Bait-ul-Maal (PBM) Malik Zaheer Abbas Khokhar, Dr Sania was taken around various sections of the shelter home and reviewed the facilities, arrangements and infrastructure provided to needy, vulnerable and shelter-less. She directed the Director of the Shelter Home and other staff to provide all kinds of facilities to the shelter-less as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan and maintain quality of the shelters at all costs. Later, talking to media, Special Assistant Senator Sania Nishtar said that shelters and Langar Khanas had been set up all over the country under Ehsas program, adding that the program would be further expanded to facilitate maximum poor people.

In those areas where shelter homes or Langar Khanas are not available, citizens are being fed through mobile kitchens on trucks under the Koi Bhooka Na Soya (No one goes to sleep without meal) programme. - APP

Dr. Sumera shortlisted for Politician of the Year Award

DNA

PESHAWAR: Chairperson Women Parliamentary Caucus Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, MPA Dr Sumera Shams has been shortlisted for One Young World Politician of the Year Award 2022. The One Young World Politician of the Year Award was created in 2018 to recognize the most promising young politicians between the ages of 18-35 from around the world.

The winners are selected based on the impact they are having in their home countries and how they have used their position to benefit young people specifically. It is the first global award recognizing the work of young politicians and was launched to counter the low level of youth engagement in politics. The award is conferred to five promising young politicians selected from various countries annually. Dr. Sumera Shams said that she was delighted and honored to be nominated together with these incredible young politicians who were having a positive global impact and inspiring others with their leadership.



SAHIWAL: The inauguration ceremony of Gender Protection Unit and Police Library was graced by Mr Alex Ballinger, Uk Representative to Punjab, Mr Talal Raza, Political Advisory, BHC, Mr Ali Bahadur Qazi, Commissioner Sahiwal Division, Mr Moeen Masood, RPO Sahiwal and Saima Qadeer, Executive Director, GDP. - DNA

AJK leaders hold rally to highlight Indian atrocities

President, PM AJK urge int'l community to hold India accountable; Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan says India will face the consequences of its actions in Kashmir

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir rally was organized in Islamabad on Thursday to condemn Indian atrocities in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir and express solidarity with the oppressed Kashmiri people. The rally was taken out from Islamabad Press Club and culminated at D-Chowk. People from different walks of life participated in the rally and raised full throated slogans in support of Kashmiri people. President AJK Barrister Sultan Chaudhry, Prime Minister AJK Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi, President PTI Azad Kashmir and senior Minister Sardar Tanvir Ilyas, Former Prime Minister

Raja Farooq Haider, President PPP Chaudhry Yasin and other political leaders attended in large numbers. Addressing the rally, Azad Kashmir President Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry said the sacrifices rendered by the Kashmiri people will not go in vain and they will see the dawn of independence. Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry said rallies will also be held in other cities as well as abroad to highlight the Kashmir dispute at the international level. Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Abdul Qayyum Niazi said the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir stand by the valiant people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing the rally, PTI Azad Kashmir President and Most Senior

Minister Sardar Tanvir Ilyas Khan said that PTI government is poised to help Kashmiris achieve their right to self determination. Sardar Tanvir Ilyas said we don't want to enter our names in books but we want to practically help the Kashmir cause. He called upon international community to hold India accountable for its crimes and atrocities in Kashmir. Sardar Tanvir said that it is unfortunate that whenever some human rights violation occurs anywhere in the world, the United Nations steps up, but remains silent on Indian crimes in Kashmir. Sardar Tanvir Ilyas said that India is playing with fire, and if it doesn't halt its inhumane plans, this fire can spread throughout the world. Shedding



light on poor state of minorities in India, Sardar Tanvir said that Muslim women and Children are subject to brutal and inhumane violence in India. He said that the political scenario of the region is changing and India is afraid of it. Sardar Tanvir

Khan said that Muslims can never be subjected to slavery and oppression. India will face the consequences of its atrocities. He thanked all the political leaders and people for attending and making the All Parties Kashmir Rally a success.

Nepal ambassador visits Sadhu Belo temple

DNA

SUKKHAR: Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan Tapas Adhikari visited Sadhu Belo (Forest) temple complex in Sukkur, Sindh. The complex is one of the biggest pilgrimage site of Pakistani Hindus and daily a large number of worshippers, spiritual seekers and other tourists visit the island for pilgrimage and to see the cultural heritage of Pakistan. Situated on island middle in the Indus River, it is believed that the Sadhu Belo was established by an ascetic, Bankhandi Maharaj, of Udashin sect, from Nepal in the 18th century. The Evacuee Trust Property Board of Pakistan has well maintained and preserved the property.



Bid to free accused foiled by Gujrat police

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: Assistant Sub-inspector has foiled an attempt to free the accused from police custody here Thursday. It is reported that Ghazi Chak police were proceeding back to police post with an accused dacoit Muhammad Qasim after obtaining the physical remand of the accused on their official van GTJ 1040 Thursday morning. When they reached near the Goral graveyard, two unidentified persons attacked on police with automatic guns. Police retaliated accordingly and foiled their bid to free their accomplice. One bullet of the assailants injured the accused Qasim.

Police managed to push away the assailants. On the report of ASI Shahzad Ahmed, police have registered a case.

Electricity bill arrived before connection

Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) has sent a bill to a consumer who was not yet provided connection so far. A consumer Muhammad Afzaal resident of Shehbazpur filed an application for power connection about 10 months ago. GEPCO sent him a demand note a few days ago which has been paid by the applicant. While the applicant is still waiting for connection, GEPCO has sent him a bill of this month. The applicant has urged the officials to take notice.

Self assessment meetings held

FAISALABAD: QEC successfully conducted Self-Assessment Meetings for 2021-22 during the month of January, 2022. The Data regarding Self-Assessment Reports were compiled by the concerned departments and submitted to QEC on templates of Quality Assurance Agency, HEC. - DNA

Tenders for Roger flyover will be opened on March 16

ANWAR CHOCHAN

KHARIAN: Tenders for mega project Roger Flyover at a cost of Rs. 1172 million will be opened on March 16 in Kharian-Sarai Alamgir. The details have been revealed in the DCC meeting chaired by MNA Syed Faizul Hassan Shah. Deputy Commissioner Dr Khuram Shehzad also addressed the meeting. MPA Chaudhry Muhammad Arshad, ticket holder N. A71 Chaudhry Muhammad Ilyas, Usman Dhadra, Syed Wajahat, Qazi Saifulah, Deputy Director Development Jahangir Butt and other officers were also present. It was informed



GT Road, Lala Musa Bypass Road is in full swing, 132 out of 135 projects of CDP Phase II at a cost of Rs. 110 projects of Phase III will cost Rs. 1 billion. Similarly, work on 76 projects of SDGs Phase III is in progress. Tenders for 175 projects of SDGs Phase IV costing Rs. 15. Deputy Commissioner Dr Khuram Shehzad directed the officers to pay special attention to the development projects. Complaints about the quality of materials would be intolerable. He directed the DFO to work out a plan for beautification of Old GT Road as soon as possible and the Public Health Department to complete the Jail Chowk Sewerage Project on time.

3rd int'l consumer products fair to kick off

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI: The 3rd International Consumer Product Fair will be kicked off from Friday in financial hub of Karachi with the participation of eight companies from the Islamic Republic of Iran. The participation of eight Iranian companies is the largest number of foreign companies in the event which will conclude on Sunday, February 27th. The Iranian companies will also be displaying home appliances, confectionary products, soaps and detergents and health equipment in the event. Hassan Nourian, the Consul General of Iran in Karachi, told that after the significant presence of Iranian companies in the 17th Industry, Machinery and Renewable Energy Exhibition in Karachi in November last year, the presence of Iranian companies in another international event in the eastern neighborhood is a major step to expand bilateral economic cooperation. Referring to the efforts of the Iranian Consulate General in Karachi to strengthen trade.

North Waziristan ADP discussed

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: In connection with the Accelerated Economic Development Program (AIP Phase II), a consultative meeting was held in Miranshah, the headquarter of North Waziristan, under the direction of the provincial government, in which new development projects within the district were discussed in detail.

The meeting held at Miranshah Jirga Hall was attended by Deputy Commissioner North Waziristan Shahid Ali Khan, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning Riaz Khan, Additional Assistant Commissioner Miranshah, heads of all-line departments, journalist community and elders of utmanzai tribes. Deputy Commissioner Shahid Ali Khan briefed the jirga members on the development projects completed in North Waziristan under the AIP program during the last three years.

On this occasion, tribal elders Malik Nasrullah Khan, Malik Mohammad Rehman, Malik Yarma Jan, Malik Ejid Mohammad, Noor Bahram journalist, youth representatives and representatives of business community of Miranshah sub-division appreciated the consultative process for AIP Phase 2 and presented their suggestions. The elders suggested the upgradation of Miranshah Hospital (Kidney Dialysis Center, Thalassemia Center, Blood Bank), compensation payment for Miranshah Datta Khel Bazaar and other bazaars, special development package for Datta Khel, trade promotion on Ghulam Khan border, establishment of border market at Ghulam Khan for promotion of trade. Deputy Commissioner North Waziristan said on the occasion that the suggestions of all the participants would be sent to the provincial government.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

FEBRUARY	
Feb 04/ Sri Lanka	National Day
Feb 06/ N. Zealand	National Day
Feb 06/ Uganda	Army Day
Feb 11/ Iran	Revolution day
Feb 16/ DPR Korea	National Day
Feb 16/ Lithuania	National Day
Feb 18/ Gambia	National Day
Feb 19/ Nepal	Democracy Day
Feb 23/ Uzbekistan	National Day
Feb 23/ Brunei	National Day
Feb 23/ Guyana	National Day
Feb 23/ Russia	National Army Day
Feb 23/ Tajikistan	Armed Forces Day
Feb 25/ Kuwait	National Day



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Islamabad Metropolitan

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Rawal Town.....	5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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ISLAMABAD: Henrik Persson Ambassador Embassy of Sweden witnesses paintings during an exhibition held at PNCA. – DNA

Indonesian Envoy urges Pak to focus on ASEAN

Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Indonesia was a trillions dollar economy and was very important country for Pakistan to promote trade and exports

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Adam M. Tugio, Ambassador of Indonesia said that the East was the future of the global economy and Pakistan should develop close cooperation with Indonesia to get better market access to ASEAN region. He said that China has around US\$ 700 billion trade with ASEAN region while Pakistan has only US\$ 7 billion trade with it and stressed that Pakistan should give more focus to East Asia and Pacific that have huge potential for trade and exports. He said that Pakistan should diversify its trade with Indonesia by focusing on more items. He said that both countries should pay attention to those areas in which they could complement each other's economy. He said that the Indonesian Embassy would try to bring trade delegations to Pakistan and simi-



larly facilitate the Pakistani business community to visit Indonesia to explore new avenues of promoting bilateral trade between the two countries. He said that Pakistan and Indonesia were reviewing tariffs to bring more products in the trade agreement and ICCI should also give its input to make the trade agreement more ben-

eficial for both countries. He further said that he was interested to work with ICCI for promoting economic empowerment of women in Islamic countries as he was already in touch with the embassies of Saudi Arabia, UAE, Malaysia and other Islamic countries for this purpose. He said that Pakistan youth was doing a great job in free-

lancing that would benefit its economy. He emphasized that Pakistan should also harness its e-commerce potential to accelerate the growth of its economy. He expressed these views while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Mu-

hammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Indonesia was a trillions dollar economy and was very important country for Pakistan to promote trade and exports. He said that the combined population of Pakistan and Indonesia was a huge market of over 490 million people with great potential for trade, joint ventures and

investment for the entrepreneurs of both countries. He said that Indonesia provided Pakistan easy access to ASEAN region and similarly Pakistan provided Indonesia easy access to the South Asian region. So, it was very important for both countries to develop close cooperation for achieving mutually beneficial results.

COMSTECH holds workshop on Research integrity in clinical trials

ISLAMABAD: A 2-day International Workshop on "Research integrity in clinical trials – challenges and solutions in low and middle income countries" organized by UEARS in collaboration with COMSTECH, Assiut University, and Granada University in Cairo, Egypt. COMSTECH distinguished scholar Prof. Dr. Khalid Saeed Khan of Universidad de Granada, Spain was one of the conveners of the workshop. The objective of the workshop was to help devise solutions for the challenges faced in clinical trials by low and middle income countries and to impart knowledge and training about research integrity. The value of clinical trials depends on the quality of information produced and the relevance of the data to address public health needs. There are many less-developed countries that do not have well-prepared medical infrastructure and little or no experience in conducting trials. To overcome these challenges this 2-day training and development workshop in the area of research integrity in clinical trials is organized. The workshop spanned over two days consisting upon four sessions and 31 scientific lectures delivered by renowned experts in the field. Each day ended with general discussions. More than 40 clinicians, students and researchers from different countries attended this event. – APP

Shah Bahar appointed DC-IR

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has appointed Shah Bahar, a BS-18 officer of Inland Revenue (IR) Services, as Deputy Commissioner-IR, Large Tax Peers Office, Islamabad. According to the FBR notification issued here on Thursday, he has resigned from the post of Second Secretary (BDT-IT-II), FBR Headquarters, and has taken over the post. The FBR also informed that Muhammad Hasnain Shamim, BS-18 Officer, IR Services, has taken over the charge of Post Deputy Commissioner-IR, Office of the Chief Taxpayer, Lahore. – APP

Kazakhstan business delegation visits Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce

RAWALPINDI: A Kazakhstani business delegation visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce, led by Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzhan Kistafin, and included representatives

from the construction, education, food, healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors. "Kazakhstan attaches great importance to diplomatic and trade relations with Pakistan. Thirty years ago, on this very

day, diplomatic relations were established on the occasion of the visit of Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to Pakistan," said Kazakh Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin. A business council is being

formed comprising two members from the chamber, he said, adding that co-operation between the business community and the private sector is needed to enhance bilateral trade relations. The visit of today's trade delegation is part of efforts for bringing the business community of two countries closer. The bilateral trade volume is very much low which needs to be enhanced, he added. On this occasion, Chamber President Nadeem Rauf said that the bilateral trade volume between Pakistan and Kazakhstan is less than one million dollars, direct flights should be started between the two countries and the banking system should be improved to increase bilateral trade volume. – DNA



PNCA to organize puppet show

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) would showcase a Puppet Show on February 25 (Friday) aiming at entertaining audience along with family and friends.

Talking to APP, official of PNCA Masroor Shah said, "The show would be featuring folk dances, stories, theme-based speeches and skits for children and adults". The colorful puppet show will revolve around current issues including gender disparity, contrariety in education and environmental challenges and there will be an exclusive show for kids as well, which will ensure infotainment according to the theme.

He said that due to COVID-19 the puppet shows were being canceled, but the shows were scheduled four times a month as regular feature by National Puppet Theatre (NPT) of PNCA. Such events provide the required boost to puppetry and help people, especially the younger generation to become aware of it, he added.

He said that the traditional art of puppetry was dying and PNCA has been struggling so long to revive this art adding that such events help in reviving this traditional art form. He further said that the art of puppetry and puppet shows have long been a part of Pakistani culture. – APP

92,000 scholarships under Ehsaas Programme

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib Thursday said the government had so far granted around 92,000 scholarships on merit to male and female students from all public sector universities under the Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarship Programme, a key component of Prime Minister's Ehsaas Programme.

The minister, on his Twitter handle, said by extending the scholarship facility to the students, especially those who belonged to low-income families, had transformed their dream of getting higher education in universities into a reality. For the current year, Farrukh said around 122,744 applications had been received for the Ehsaas Scholarship from across the country including Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. – DNA



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

Briefs

Minister hails decision in Noor Muqaddam case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Barrister DrFaroghNaseem on Thursday hailed the trial court decision in Noor Muqaddam murder case. A sessions court in Islamabad had awarded death sentence to prime accused ZahirJaffar in Noor Muqaddam murder case. Appreciating the decision of sessions court, the law minister in a news statement termed it a victory for rule of law and justice. "We welcome the decision in case and also thanks to Islamabad Police, the Prosecution Service and the Prosecutor for presenting the evidence and arguments of the case in the best possible way," he added. He said that the Noor Muqaddam murder case had been brought to logical conclusion. The verdict in the Noor Muqaddam murder case had further strengthened the justice system, he added. He said that the current government was striving to ensure rule of law and full protection of the rights of women and children. He said that such strong decisions in the cases of women and children further strengthened the government's aim for rule of law. The government's priority was to ensure that those who violate the rights of women and children were severely punished, he added. He said that the implementation of the Anti-Rape Act would definitely reduce such heinous crimes.

5-G technology to be available by April-2023

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) Maj Gen. (R) Amir AzeemBajwa said that PTA has prepared a policy framework for rolling out 5G in the country and the advanced technology would be available by April 2023. "PTA has developed a framework and it will be made available after the successful trials of the next-generation wireless network by telecom operators," he said while talking to APP. He said that the PTA always supported and encouraged the introduction of new technologies and enhanced services. In response to a question, he said that there would be open bidding for 5G technology. The chairman said opportunities will be provided to existing companies as well as new operators. He was of the view that the launch of 5G technology would boost online economic activities. To another question, he said, that at present the number of female subscribers in the telecom sector in Pakistan is low. "We strive to attract women to use telecom services under their identity" he added. - APP

USC successfully completes automation project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Utility Stores Corporation (USC) Thursday successfully completed a very important project of automation in a short span of time in line with the vision of Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan for Digital Pakistan. Under the project, Utility Stores has connected more than 3700 stores and more than 120 warehouses of Pakistan's largest retail stores network to the Central Database and moved all the stores to Point of Sales Terminals (POS) so that Customers could be issued a computerized bill after each transaction, said a news release issued here. In addition, the Utility Stores Corporation has successfully completed the automation of supply chain management, crossing an important milestone in the company's 50-year history. The PM took special interest in this journey of successful completion of the automation project and continued to provide guidance during the completion of this project.

Promotion of cultural activities govt priority

The guest of honour was Minister of Culture & Heritage Mr. Shafqat Mahmood. Several Ambassadors and senior bureaucrats were in attendance, as well as esteemed artists and art enthusiasts

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: It is individuals and organisations like Foundation Art Divvy who keep the cultural scene of Pakistan alive. Your organization has done a fantastic job. The three women who contributed to this event are truly outstanding Shafqat Mahmood, the Federal Minister for Education and Culture said this while speaking as the chief guest. He said, on Foundation Art Divvy's Five-Year Anniversary, we would like to honour our supporters and celebrate the catalogue of the inaugural Pavilion of Pakistan "Manora Field Notes: Naiza Khan" at the Venice Biennale 2019, curated by Zahra Khan and presented by the Pakistan National Council of the Arts & Foundation Art Divvy. The catalogue was published by Mousse Publishing and Foundation Art Divvy in 2019, and it was originally launched in 2019 at the Pakistan High Commission in London. The catalogue celebration and talk



with Foundation Art Divvy Creative Director Zahra Khan and artist Naiza Khan was followed by a film on Foundation Art Divvy. The guest of honour was Minister of Culture & Heritage Mr. Shafqat Mahmood. Several Ambassadors and senior bureaucrats were in attendance, as well as es-

teemed artists and art enthusiasts. The catalogue of Manora Field Notes, the inaugural Pavilion of Pakistan, documents the Pavilion through richly printed photographs of the multimedia installations as well as images of archival material and the artistic production process. In addition to

a statement by curator Zahra Khan, the catalogue includes reflections by leading scholars Iftikhar Dadi, Aamir R. Mufti and Emilia Terracciano, along with an insightful text by Naiza Khan on her creative process that offers depth to our understanding of the complex exhibition. Foundation Art Divvy provides a platform at an institutional level, locally and internationally to the arts from Pakistan. In addition to an annual large scale institutional art exhibition: Pakistan's pavilion to the Venice Biennale in 2019; collaterals to the Lahore Biennale: Sagar Theatre on Queen's Road (2020) and I, too, am a part of this history (2018); and Two Wings To Fly, Not One: Aisha Khalid & Imran Qureshi (2017); and a series of exhibitions at Rossi & Rossi Gallery in London, its latest venture has been Divvy Film Festival, celebrating independent Pakistani cinema which recently completed its second iteration, as well as Art Divvy Conversations, a series of insta-live interviews with artists and filmmakers across South Asia.

EUs foreign policy is motivated by prevention of wars

Mr. Gilmore stated that every trade agreement the EU signs has a human rights clause in it and different countries are given concessions under trade preferences



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a Public Talk titled, "Centrality of Human Rights in EU Foreign Policy," on February 23, 2022. Mr. Eamon Gilmore, European Union's Special Representative for Human Rights was the Guest of Speaker for the event. In her introductory remarks DrNeelumNigar, Director,

CSP, welcomed the guests and said that Human Rights is very important subject and needs more discussion. While in his welcome remarks Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General, ISSI, said that human rights is a topic on which the people in Pakistan are becoming more conscious about. There still a lot that needs to be done by Pakistan to fully implement the human rights conventions it is signatory to. In his talk, Mr. Eamon Gilmore said that it has been 60

years since the diplomatic relations between the EU and Pakistan were set up and it is one of the longest and most valued one. EU takes the view that human rights are universal and belong to all people. He said that EUs foreign and human rights policy is motivated by prevention of great wars from happening again and to eliminate phobias present in the European societies. Mr. Gilmore also said that EU is a unique form of cooperation between 27 different countries having varied

political, economic, and cultural interests and are bonded by treaties and conventions. From the outset, human rights played a very important role in the formation of the EU and is important for its foreign policy also. He further added that EUs foreign policy is an independent policy and is not borrowed from any country or bloc and is based on strategic autonomy. Mr. Gilmore stated that every trade agreement the EU signs has a human rights clause in it and different countries are given concessions under trade preferences. One such preference has been given to Pakistan in the form of GSP+. EU-Pakistan relations revolve around governance, democracy, and law. He added that some legislations with regards to religious minorities and labour laws still need to be worked on to protect human rights violations in the country. Mr. Gilmore concluded by saying that Pakistan has shown commitment to continue working on human right conventions and both the EU and Pakistan need to keep working on common causes and issues of mutual interests.

Pakistan wants enhanced co-op with US: President

The President said that Pakistani diaspora in America had the potential to serve as a bridge to increase bilateral economic and commercial relations

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday said that Pakistan wanted to further enhance bilateral cooperation with the United States of America (USA) in various fields, particularly in the areas of trade and economy. He added that the Information Technology (IT) sector of the country had immense potential and foreign investors needed to capitalize upon the investment-friendly environment of the country and invest in Pakistan's IT sector. The President was talking to the Ambassador-designate of Pakistan to the USA Sardar Masood Khan, who called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. He stated that as the government was focusing on the geo-economics, there was a need to explore further areas of cooperation to enhance bilateral trade and Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) from USA. The President said that Pakistani diaspora in America had the potential to serve as a bridge to increase bilateral economic and commercial relations, in addition to investing in various sectors of Pakistan's economy, particularly IT sector. He asked the Ambassador-designate to expose the real face of India which was involved in gross human rights violations against the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir. The President congratulated Sardar Masood Khan on his appointment as Ambassador of Pakistan to the USA and expressed the hope that he would play his role in further improving bilateral relationships with the USA. - APP



Dr Fehmida Mirza, NSFs heads review preparations for SAG

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Dr Fehmida Mirza on Thursday met with different heads of the National Sports Federations (NSFs) and reviewed the plans for preparations of the South Asian Games (SAG). She met with President of Pakistan Handball Federation Muhammad Shafiq, President of Pakistan Taekwondo Federation Col (R) Waseem Ahmed, and Vice President of National Rifle Association Col (R) Agha Abbas here at her office. The purpose of the meetings was to review the plans for the preparations of players for upcoming events especially South Asian Games. The plans for the promotion of these sports in the country were discussed as well. The minister reviewed the preparations for holding the upcoming South Asian Games and gave her full backing to hire foreign coaches for players training. She said the government was not cutting in corners in the implementation of its sports policy. "Pakistan needs these games to project its soft image on a global stage and highlight the country as a secure place for international players," she said. - APP

Pakistan-Turkish cohesion to help counter Islamophobia

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Religious Affairs Minister Dr Ali Arbash's recent visit to Pakistan will open new vistas of religious cohesion and help devise a 'counter strategy' to cope with Islamophobia globally. During his five-day stay in Pakistan, he met his Pakistani counterpart Pir Noor ulHaqQadri and many other high-profile figures in the government, besides religious scholars and academia, and discussed confidence-building measures to get the Muslim world out of prevailing social and

religious crisis. DrArbash, addressing a seminar, organized by the International Islamic University Islamabad, said the world powers' social engineering had brought the planet at the brink of destruction. This social engineering mostly affected the Muslim world and forced the Muslim Ummah to live below the poverty line through wars, occupations and violence, he added. He said the world powers with strategic planning manipulated the Islamic world by cultural and economic distortions. He said the recent

efforts to malign Islam - a religion of peace - had drawn the attention towards the world Islamophobia. Dr Arbash said Islamophobia, a conspiracy hatched against Islam, was a sensitive issue of human rights carrying hidden agendas of self-interests of enemies. He said Islam was being projected a religion of extremism on the globe according to a pre-planned strategy. He said there were certain media houses in Europe and West trying to interlink terrorism with Islam in order to hide its enlightened as-

pects of life from the world. He said Islamophobia was not limited to the Europe or West now adding whatsoever was happening in India and Myanmar, it was also a part and parcel of it. Termining Islamophobia anti-Islamism, he urged the Muslim world to launch a worldwide drive to counter the negative propaganda being associated with the Muslims and Islam. He also urged the Ulema and Mashaikh world over to devise a 'counter strategy' to foil the nefarious designs of anti-Islam elements with collective efforts. - APP

Plastic ban enforcement inspected

ISLAMABAD: The joint enforcement team of the Climate Change Ministry, Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency and Islamabad Capital Territory Administration on Thursday resumed the long halted action since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic against violations of single-use plastic bags ban in the federal capital. Director Chemicals Ministry of Climate Change, Dr Zaigham Abbas, Deputy Director Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) DrSadiaMunawer and Assistant Commissioner Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Abdullah Khan visited the F-6 Markaz and inspected numerous shops to check compliance of ban on plastic bags. The team inspected wholesale shops, grocery stores, green groceries, meat shops, plain bread shops and other outlets and imposed heavy fines on repeated violations by the shopkeepers. Speaking on the occasion, AC Abdullah Khan said the enforcement drive of the restrictions imposed on the single-use polythene or plastic bags has been revived as the government banned plastic bags back in 2019. He said the ICT Administration along with the Ministry's team would raid all the markets of the federal capital every Thursday to ensure compliance. The enforcement drive would continue till the federal capital was purged of the menace of plastics, he added. Director Chemicals, Dr Zaigham Abbas said the use, sale and manufacturing of plastic bags was completely banned in the federal capital. "The aim of aggressive compliance of ban is to establish Islamabad as a model plastic free city to be replicated by the provinces to make the country plastic free." - APP

29 new Covid cases in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: As many as 29 more people were tested positive for coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 46,165 in the Rawalpindi district, while four persons lost their battle of life against the deadly disease. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Thursday, among the new patients, ten belonged to the Potohar town, six from the Rawalpindi Cantonment, four from Islamabad, two from Gujjar Khan and KallarSyedan, while one each case has arrived from AJK, Taxila, Murree, Kotli-Sattian and Rawal town. "Presently, 37 patients are admitted to three health facilities, including 25 in the Institute of Urology, ten in the Fauji Foundation Hospital and two in the Benazir Bhutto Hospital." The report updated that two patients were on ventilators in critical condition, four stable and 31 were on double oxygen support. District Health Authority added that during the last 24 hours, 1,158 samples were collected, out of which 1,129 were declared negative, while the positivity rate was recorded at 2.50 percent. - APP

Mobile phone imports increases 11pc in 7 months

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed an increase of 11.86 percent during the seven months of the fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan imported mobile phones worth the US \$1270.415 million during July-January (2021-22) as compared to the imports of US \$1135.672 million during July-January (2020-21), showing growth of 11.86 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Meanwhile, on a year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones however witnessed a decrease of 8.68 percent during the month of January 2022 when compared to the same month of last year. The import of mobile phones into the country during January 2022 was recorded at \$179.768 million against the exports of \$196.853 million in January 2021.

Nature-based solutions need to be adopted

The Minister further said that the most worrisome aspect of climate change was the potential climate-induced migration that could take place causing 400 million people to become climate migrants in South Asia, half of them from Bangladesh

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Commenting on the challenge of Climate Change and strategies to mitigate the crisis, Malik Amin Aslam stated that Pakistan was the most vulnerable country at the risk of bearing the impacts of climate change and needed to come up with nature-based solutions. He was speaking at the two-day international conference titled "South Asia: Emerging Opportunities and Challenges" organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) here on Thursday. He said that it was important to realize that South Asia was home to one of the top 3 global polluters, i.e., India and two of the most

climate vulnerable countries, i.e., Bangladesh and Pakistan. Pakistan had a few global hotspots, which could become unliveable in times to come because of the increase in global temperatures, he added. The Minister further said that the most worrisome aspect of climate change was the potential climate-induced migration that could take place causing 400 million people to become climate migrants in South Asia, half of them from Bangladesh. He added that the current government was committed to finding sustainable solutions which were possible only after collective action. In this lieu, he mentioned the Living Rivers Initiative, which he was hopeful would commence by April this year. He explained that the Initiative was aimed at emphasizing the significance of pre-



serving river ecology. Aisha Khan, CEO Civil Society Coalition for Climate Change (CSCCC) said that Pakistan was the fifth most vulnerable country among South Asian countries at the risk of suffering from the most horrific impacts of climate change. She said that the

issues related to climate change were deeply intertwined, especially in case of Pakistan, ranging from water management to poor air quality and glacial melts to inadequate mechanisms for ecological preservation. Climate change was a phenomenon that had no respect for boundaries, she added, and hence its mitigation required multi-lateral solutions. She recommended that promoting hydro-electricity was the need of the hour in addition to promotion of effective information-sharing systems on crisis management. She added that there was also a need for a more coordinated research on Climate Change and promotion of tourism for social harmony. Expanded tourism was imperative to inculcate sensitivity for this shared ecology, she said. Admiral (R) Iftikhar Ahmed Rao,

Senior Expert on Maritime Affairs while commenting on the security of high seas said that although Pakistan had taken many tangible steps, there was an urgent need for collective efforts at both regional and international levels, to properly address the threats posed by the seas, like piracy, arms smuggling and maritime terror. Kosh Raj Koirala, Associate Editor Republica Daily, Nepal while commenting on the growing challenge of misinformation, propaganda and fake news said that it was of elementary importance to reinstate the trust of people in media and journalism. He added that while the elimination of any gateway in the form of social media outlets had removed the barriers to the flow of information and at the same time had compromised authenticity.

Trade with India

REGIONAL trade plays a significant role in any country's business development. Unfortunately, South Asia as a region has not fully utilised the potential of regional trade. One of the major causes of this lack of progress on bilateral trade is the enmity between India and Pakistan. Some solid efforts were made during the first decade of the 21st century to enhance bilateral trade but during the past decade or so this has declined to an extremely low level. Especially after 2014 – when the Modi government assumed power in India – bilateral trade gradually plummeted.

The benefits of bilateral trade are not alien to those in the business community on both sides. We have had both Mian Mansha and Razzak Dawood express their support for backchannel talks to improve trade relations but there has not been any official confirmation of any such meetings. Business communities in both countries have for long demanded a resumption of trade and facilitation of transit trades to countries across borders but political considerations have trumped economic ones. South Asia is a region that stretches from Kabul and Karachi to Kolkata and Colombo, with tremendous potential for mutually beneficial trade ties. Pakistan can also earn much-needed foreign exchange by offering transit facilities to neighbouring countries. There is a need for better economic ties and India and Pakistan need to transcend their narrow political considerations. There is hardly any other region in the world which has that many people and so little regional trade. India and Pakistan have to revive the good old South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) that has been dormant for many years now. Economic progress has a lot to do with how we relate to our neighbours, and that's where the crux of the matter lies. If we can't compete with our neighbours, we cannot dream of doing the same with the rest of the world. It is unfortunate that India and Pakistan have nearly 90 percent of the GDP of South Asia but with bilateral trade of just over two billion dollars. This is neither advisable nor a sustainable situation. Of course, the issue of Kashmir – particularly now with a right-wing government in India – is a major factor in the lack of trade initiatives between the two countries. Perhaps, growing trade and economic ties could also help with conflicts and disputes between India and Pakistan. This could be the win-win situation that has been neglected till now.

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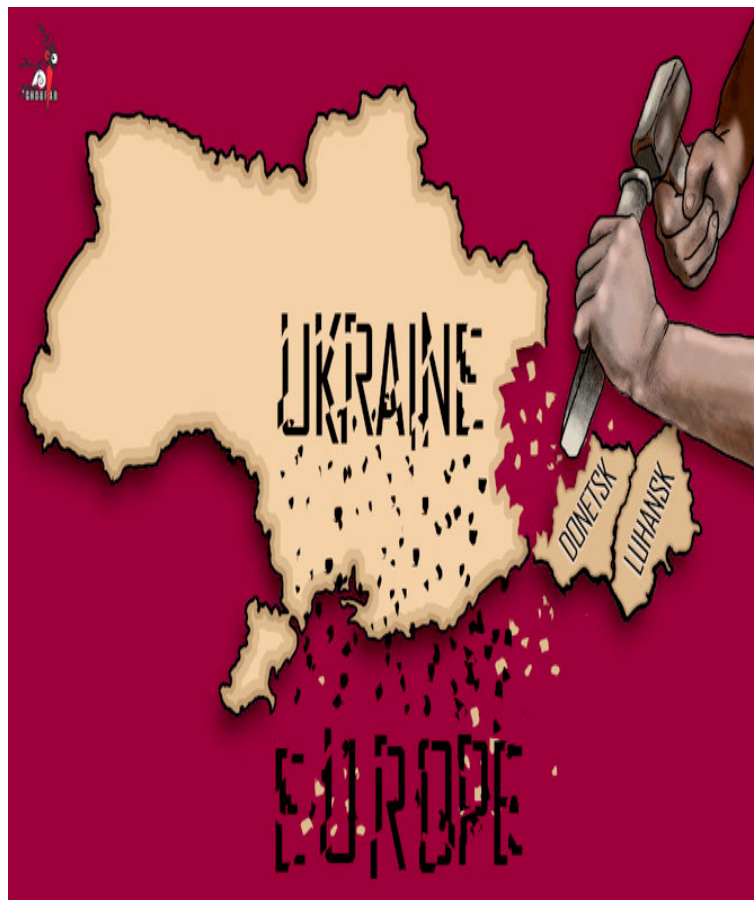
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Challenges in ex-Fata

DEVELOPMENT work in the former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) has suffered massively – first because of the war on terror and then due to a lack of funds allocated to it. Now Federal Minister for Finance Shaukat Tarin has assured a special parliamentary committee that he will take up the issue of the promised National Finance Commission (NFC) share with all the provinces. The recently merged tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa deserve a better deal, having been neglected for so long. The Special Committee on Development of erstwhile Fata has taken a right step by bringing up this issue once again. There is certainly an urgent need to expedite efforts for developing consensus among all stakeholders for allocation of adequate funds for the region. Though the minister wants the provinces to agree for three percent allocation from the divisible pool of the 10th NFC Award, this proposal needs some dissection. There is also the matter of the stalled process of compensation in South Waziristan to the war-affected people. The spending mechanism on projects in this region also needs revision. A perennially slow pace of utilising the allocations from the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) does not alleviate the harsh circumstances that the local people face. Though there are dozens of colleges in that region, there is a need to focus on employability of the students as they have lacked exposure to the outside world for long.

To make progress after the merger, this region deserves digital freedom. Attaining digital access is a fundamental right which must be respected. There has been an undeclared digital policy which is contrary to the norms of today's digitally dependent world. Restoration of the internet in ex-Fata must be implemented now that people from the former Fata region have moved back home and feel cut off from the rest of the country due to a lack of 3G and 4G services. Then there is also the demand for increasing ex-Fata's provincial assembly seats and extension of the judiciary to the region. But still the most significant matter remains the three percent NFC award share. The federal government and the provinces need to come to an agreement about this as soon as possible.

Ukraine: It's the new world order, stupid

James M. Dorsey

Sanctions are unlikely to project the United States and Europe as capable of preventing Mr. Putin from establishing his new world order in the former Soviet Union or in lands where he could artificially create outposts of the Russian world by supporting Russian-language education as he is trying to do in the Central African Republic

UKRAINE is about much more than the security of one sovereign nation. The battle for Ukraine is a battle for the new world order.

In that battle, Russian President Vladimir Putin is living up to the worst expectations of Western policymakers and analysts. Unlike Chinese President Xi Jinping, Mr. Putin is seeking to overthrow the current world order, at least as far Europe and the continent's security architecture is concerned.

By contrast, Mr. Xi would prefer to ensure China's place in the existing world order, enhanced with what he would call Chinese characteristics. But, in doing so, Mr. Xi dangerously blurs the lines between maintaining and fundamentally altering the current world order.

If the period since World War One was in the words of President Woodrow Wilson about "making the world

safe for democracy," today it is in the mind of Mr. Putin and the words of Financial Times columnist Gideon Rahman about "making the world safe for autocrats."

What Messrs. Putin and Xi have in common and share with a critical mass of other world leaders, including India's Narendra Modi, Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Hungary's Victor Orban, and former US President Donald J. Trump, is that they think in civilisational rather than national terms. In doing so, they define their nation's borders in civilisational instead of internationally recognized legal terms.

That is what Mr. Putin was talking about when he this week, slumped in a chair with a seemingly bored expression on his face, spoke for 90 minutes, during which he announced Russian recognition of two breakaway Ukrainian republics. Mr. Putin's version of history was designed to justify Russian and Russian-backed infringements on Ukrainian territory and define the civilisational borders of what he calls the Russian world. The boundaries of that world are defined by the presence of Russian speakers and/or adherents to Russian culture on any given territory. That is the backdrop to Mr. Putin's suggestion that none of the states that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union – except for Russia – were real countries and that Ukraine had no tradition of genuine statehood. Much like Saddam Hussein's justification of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Mr. Putin's reasoning would deny legitimacy to most states in Europe and beyond. The same is true for Mr. Xi's claims to the South China Sea or efforts to control the ethnic Chinese Diaspora.

That matters little to Mr. Putin and other civilisationalist leaders whose world is one in which might is right. Russian recognition in 2008 of two breakaway republics in Georgia, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and fostering of secessionist insurgents in the Donetsk and Luhansk

regions of Ukraine, and the temporary-turned permanent presence of a significant number of Russian troops in Belarus prove the point.

What has gone unnoticed is that since 2014 Mr. Putin has talked about Kazakhstan in terms of the same denial of a national history that he employs when he speaks about Ukraine. Weeks before Russian troops intervened early this year in Kazakhstan to squash mass anti-government protests and then quickly withdrew, Mr. Putin used an unrelated question posed by Kazakhstan TV to remind his audience that "Kazakhstan is a Russian-speaking country in the full sense of the word."

Dmitry Peskov, Mr. Putin's spokesman, hit the nail on the head when he recently noted that the Russian President's autocratic domestic and foreign policies were just "the starting point." Mr. Peskov's suggestion that "there's a demand in the world for special, sovereign leaders, for decisive ones" spoke to the fact that Mr. Putin has become a model for a class of world leaders that no longer finds it necessary to pay lip service to the rule of law. For these leaders, land grabs, military threats, destabilisation, disinformation, and assassinating one's opponents are the game's new rules.

Mr. Putin's notion of the centrality of Ukraine for securing its place on the world stage has a long pedigree in militant Russian nationalism. It's a notion that was acknowledged by senior US officials already decades ago. President Jimmy Carter's Polish-born national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski noted in the 1990s that "without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire."

What happens next in pursuit of Mr. Putin's goal is anyone's guess. However, his recognition of the breakaway republics implies that, despite having parliamentary authority to

move troops at will across Russian borders, a full-scale invasion of Ukraine may be unlikely.

A retired US general suggested on the sidelines of last week's Munich Security Conference that Russia could "invest" the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. The general was not speaking about financial investment; he was reverting to the term's meaning to describe the siege of a city rather than its occupation that went out of fashion once the Cold War ended.

Despite assertions to the contrary, Mr. Putin is not irrational and on the rampage. On the contrary, he is a brinksman who has proven to be a brilliant tactician. He knows that his demand that NATO withdraws from Eastern Europe and promise to bar Ukraine from EU and NATO membership is unrealistic.

With the recognition of the breakaway Ukrainian republics, he has demonstrated that he's not worried about US and European sanctions. Russia has amassed some US\$600 billion in reserves and reduced to 50% the amount of trade conducted in dollars.

As a result, Mr. Putin, so far, can look at his sparking and manipulation of the Ukraine crisis as a success despite much of the world condemning Russia, as was evident in the United Nations Security Council debate and the caution with which China commented on the crisis. Beyond sending a chilling message to republics across the former Soviet Union, Mr. Putin has exposed weaknesses of the West at a time that liberal democracy is in crisis and under attack from illiberal and undemocratic elements on both the left and the right, some of which enjoy Russian empathy at the least.

To be sure, Mr. Putin may have given NATO and Western solidarity a new lease on life, but the United States and Europe have yet to prove that they are up for the challenge. They

have not developed an approach that acknowledges that the Russian leader is playing a long game despite assessing him as a tactician rather than a strategist.

Sanctions are unlikely to project the United States and Europe as capable of preventing Mr. Putin from establishing his new world order in the former Soviet Union or in lands where he could artificially create outposts of the Russian world by supporting Russian-language education as he is trying to do in the Central African Republic. Sanctions, no matter how painful, have so far proven to be ineffective in forcing policy, if not regime change. Take, for example, Iran. So far, harsh sanctions have not forced the Islamic republic onto its knees, and Russia is better positioned to absorb the impact of punitive penalties.

Add to this that Mr. Putin could be dealing with a different United States by the end of this year if US President Joe Biden were to lose the Senate and/or the House of Representatives in mid-term elections. Similarly, Mr. Putin could be dealing with a more empathetic French leader if President Emmanuel Macron fails to fend off his far-right challengers in April elections. Mr. Putin's long game, says journalist and author Anne Applebaum, is for Ukrainian democracy to fail. That, he hopes, would, in turn, contribute to America's failure and ensure that its democratic rhetoric rings hollow.

"These are big goals, and they might not be achievable. But Putin's beloved Soviet Union also had big, unachievable goals. Lenin, Stalin, and their successors wanted to create an international revolution, to subjugate the entire world to the Soviet dictatorship of the proletariat. Ultimately, they failed—but they did a lot of damage while trying. Putin will also fail, but he too can do a lot of damage while trying. And not only in Ukraine," Ms. Applebaum said.

Pak-Russian emerging entente in the changing world

Dr. M Akram Zaheer



Pakistan's relations with Russia weren't good and it was ally and treaty partner of the US bloc against the Soviet Union during cold war. Islamabad also helped the United States to improve its relations with China, and further alienated Beijing and Moscow

PAKISTANI Prime Minister Imran Khan is on visit of Russia at a time when President Vladimir Putin is the world's bad boy for his actions against Ukraine. Imran has become the first foreign leader to visit Russia since Putin recognized the two breakaway regions of Ukraine as independent republics, and the first Pakistani to visit the country since Nawaz Sharif's historic visit in 1999. Prime Minister Imran is visiting Russia at the invitation of the Kremlin, and Pakistani officials have said the visit was pre-arranged. In an interview with Russia's state-run RT channel on Tuesday, Imran said the visit would focus on Pakistan's relations with Russia. "This is not our concern. We have bilateral relations with Russia and we really want to strengthen it," Imran said, adding that Pakistan wants trade relations with "all countries" of the region and globe.

Inside and outside the house, everyone's eyes are on the tour. Political pundits in Pakistan see the visit as a sign of a major strategic shift in

the country. Strong Russia-Pakistan relations could change the geopolitical situation in the region. There is a question that will Pakistan be able to handle the tumultuous Taliban in regional peace talks with those who spread chaos? The change in this path depends largely on the Taliban factor. The visit is being closely watched by the United States and its allies, NATO and the European Union in the context of Ukraine and Afghanistan. As a US proxy in the new Cold War against China, India is closely following the visit of China's best friend. New Delhi's long-term strategic partnership with Moscow will be more exciting and aware of the Russia-Pakistan agreements on the cards. Undoubtedly, India will be anxious to see the result of the rapprochement with the United States in recent years. Meanwhile, Russia has also taken steps to improve relations with Pakistan. Undoubtedly, the strategic landscape is about to change for Pakistan, which is one of the key players on this side of the map. Everyone hopes that this visit will erase the bitterness of the past

and lead to a passionate and friendly future of victory, collective efforts and cooperation for the region. Both the countries have been hit hardest by the Cold War and the persecution in the region.

Pakistan's relations with Russia weren't good and it was ally and treaty partner of the US bloc against the Soviet Union during cold war. Islamabad also helped the United States to improve its relations with China, and further alienated Beijing and Moscow. In response, India and the USSR strengthened their ties with a defense agreement and increased economic and people-to-people exchanges. Pakistan saw itself as a frontline state against the spread of communism, and actively assisted in the Red Army's defeat in the First Afghan War. The collapse of the Soviet Union marked a turning point in international relations. Pakistan and Russia were seen from their best point of view as India got closer after US and economic reforms. At the end of Boris Yeltsin's presidency, Nawaz Sharif became the first Pakistani leader to visit Moscow.

Nonetheless it was only in the next decade that Putin's Russia began to establish relations with Pakistan, seeking new markets for its military equipment, as well as new international partners.

Imran-Putin meeting is an opportunity for both sides to take their message to the West about building a partnership in a changing world and may renounce talk directly about conflicts and focus more on economic relations. Imran Khan is accompanied by a delegation of cabinet ministers and key advisers. Pakistan wants Russia to invest and build a 2.5 billion gas pipeline from the port of Karachi to Kasur in the interior of Punjab. However, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said last July, Moscow is more interested in the possibility of building a 1,800-kilometer Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline. Despite public opposition to Kashmir normalizing relations with India, Pakistani officials are also talking about TAPI's capabilities, while pushing Russians for another Kazakhstan-Pakistan oil pipeline project.

Briefs

Rod Marsh
in critical
condition
after heart
attack

SYDNEY: Former Australia wicketkeeper Rod Marsh is in a critical condition after suffering a heart attack. The 74-year-old effected 355 dismissals in 96 Test appearances for Australia. Marsh also played 92 one-day internationals before retiring in 1984 and served as Australia men's chairman of selectors until 2016.

"Rod is an influential figure in Australian cricket and has been so for more than 50 years," the Australian Cricketers Association said. Marsh reportedly fell ill while on his way to a charity cricket match in Queensland. — News Desk

No plans to
send troops...

FROM PAGE 01
the wrong side of history," the leaders wrote. "We condemn President Putin for his consistent refusal to engage in a diplomatic process to address questions pertaining to European security, despite our repeated offers," the statement reads. "We stand united with partners, including NATO, the EU and their member states as well as Ukraine and remain determined to do what is necessary to preserve the integrity of the rules-based international order." The G7 meeting concluded after just over an hour, according to a White House official, running 9:17 a.m. to 10:27 a.m. ET. — Agencies

Biden speaks
with...

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"unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russian military forces," adding that Zelensky requested the US president "call on the leaders of the world to speak out clearly" against Russian President Vladimir Putin's "flagrant aggression." Washington, Joe Biden spoke with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky late Wednesday night in Washington, the White House said, with the US president vowing "support and assistance."

The conversation came soon after Russia launched an attack on Ukraine overnight, with explosions heard in multiple parts of the country. "We will continue to provide support and assistance to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people," Biden said in a statement. Biden condemned the "unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russian military forces," adding that Zelensky requested the US president "call on the leaders of the world to speak out clearly" against Russian President Vladimir Putin's "flagrant aggression."

Security
forces kill...

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forces, target killing and kidnapping for ransom," said the ISPR. It added that residents of the area lauded the operation and expressed their full support to eliminate terrorism from the area. Separately, the security forces launched an intelligence-based operation after receiving reports of the presence of a terrorist hideout in the general area of Sambaza, Balochistan. "Security forces conducted an operation to apprehend TTP terrorists in Balochistan who were trying to infiltrate into adjacent tribal districts," said the ISPR. The ISPR said that the terrorists had attacked the forces after the cave they were hiding in was surrounded. "Resultantly, one terrorist was killed. In the process, a cache of arms and ammunition was also recovered that was planned to be used by terrorists against security forces," said the ISPR. The military's media wing vowed that operations to eliminate terrorists will continue, adding that the miscreants will not be allowed to sabotage the peace and stability of the country.



WAZIRABAD: Muhammad Javed Afzal Chief of Small and Medium Enterprises Punjab along with Muhammad Asif Manager Business Development visited the cutlery association office and held talks with the members of the cutlery association of Wazirabad. — DNA

UEFA to move UCL final
after Russian invasion

World football's governing body Fifa is to meet on Thursday with Russia and Ukraine both scheduled to play in World Cup play-off matches in March

AGENCIES

LONDON: Uefa will take the 2022 Champions League final away from St Petersburg following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The decision will be made at Friday's emergency meeting of European football's governing body. Russian president Vladimir Putin launched a military invasion of neighbouring Ukraine on Thursday. World football's governing body Fifa is to meet on Thursday with Russia and Ukraine both scheduled to play in World Cup play-off matches in March. Russia are set to play Poland on 24 March, while Scotland host

Ukraine on the same day. Ukraine's domestic football league was set to resume this weekend after a winter break but that will remain suspended. Fifteen of the most recent 23-man Ukraine squad play in their homeland. Sweden are also in the play-offs and would meet Russia for a place at the World Cup finals, which get under way in Qatar in November, if both win their semi-finals. Karl-Erik Nilsson, the chairman of the Swedish Football Association, told Reuters a match in Russia was "almost unthinkable" at the moment. The Champions League final was set to be played at the Gazprom Arena in St Petersburg on 28 May but Uefa has known an escalation



in the situation between Russia and Ukraine would make it impossible to stage the match. Overnight developments have made that certain and Uefa president Aleksander Ceferin has called an emergency executive commit-

tee meeting for Friday when the decision will be confirmed. Uefa is in the process of evaluating alternatives but is now committed to changing the venue of its most prestigious club game at short notice for the third year running. Meanwhile, Zenit St Petersburg's game on Thursday will go ahead, Uefa has confirmed. They face Spanish side Real Betis away in the Europa League at 20:00 GMT. In Ukraine, football at all levels has been suspended and the Ukrainian FA has said it will appeal to prevent any Russian national or club teams participating in "any international competitions under the auspices of Fifa and Uefa". Uefa later said it "shared

the international community's concern" for Ukraine. "We remain resolute in our solidarity with the football community in Ukraine and stand ready to extend our hand to the Ukrainian people," Uefa said in a statement. The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has joined the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in condemning Russia's breach of the Olympic Truce before the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games. The Olympic Truce began seven days before the start of the Winter Olympics and ends seven days after the closing of the Winter Paralympics. A statement said: "The IOC is deeply concerned about the safety of the Olympic community in Ukraine.

PCB announces match officials
for Pakistan-Australia series

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced the match officials for the much awaited cricket series between Pakistan and Australia starting from March 04th at Pindi cricket Stadium. The Aussies will play three Tests, three ODIs and one T20 match during the historic tour taking place after 24 years. International Cricket Council (ICC) Elite panelist Aleem Dar and PCB International panelist Ahsan Raza will be the on-field umpires in all three Tests of the Pakistan versus Australia series, while ICC Chief Match Referee Ranjan Madugalle will lead the Playing Control Team. Madugalle, the former Sri Lanka captain, is the only match referee to break

the 200-match mark as he has to date refereed in 201 Tests. Aleem Dar, the three-time ICC Umpire of the Year, leads the umpires' pack with 136 matches. Asif Yaqoob, PCB Umpire of 2020 and 2021, will be the third umpire in the first and third Tests, while Rashid Riaz will be in the TV umpire's box for the second Test. Ahsan Raza, Aleem Dar, Asif Yaqoob and Rashid Riaz will share on-field umpires' responsibilities, while Muhammad Javed Malik will be the match referee for the three ODIs, which will be played on 29 March, 31 March and 2 April in Rawalpindi. Aleem and Ahsan will reunite for the one-off 5 April T20I and Muhammad Javed Malik will be the match referee. Umpire and match referee appointments:

04-08 Mar – 1st Test, Rawalpindi. Aleem Dar and Ahsan Raza (on-field), Asif Yaqoob (third umpire), Rashid Riaz (fourth umpire); Ranjan Madugalle (match referee)
12-16 Mar – 2nd Test, Karachi. Aleem Dar and Ahsan Raza (on-field), Rashid Riaz (third umpire), Asif Yaqoob (fourth umpire); Ranjan Madugalle (match referee)
21-25 Mar – 3rd Test, Lahore. Aleem Dar and Ahsan Raza (on-field), Asif Yaqoob (fourth umpire), Rashid Riaz (fourth umpire); Ranjan Madugalle (match referee)
29 Mar – 1st ODI, Rawalpindi. Aleem Dar and Asif Yaqoob (on-field), Ahsan Raza (third umpire), Faisal Afridi (fourth umpire); Mohammad Javed Malik (match referee)
31 Mar – 2nd ODI, Rawalpindi. Aleem Dar and Ahsan Raza (on-field), Asif Yaqoob (third umpire), Rashid Riaz (fourth umpire); Mohammad Javed Malik (match referee)
2 April – 3rd ODI, Rawalpindi. Aleem Dar and Rashid Riaz (on-field), Ahsan Raza (third umpire), Asif Yaqoob (fourth umpire); Mohammad Javed Malik (match referee)
5 Apr – one-off T20I, Rawalpindi. Aleem Dar and Ahsan Raza (on-field), Asif Yaqoob (third umpire), Rashid Riaz (fourth umpire); Mohammad Javed Malik (match referee).

Nadal achieves
best career start

"Always it's important to win as quick as possible, but the most important thing is to win"



SPORTS DESK

ACAPULCO: Rafael Nadal achieved his best start to an ATP Tour season on Tuesday, improving to 12-0 this year by defeating Stefan Kozlov to reach the Mexican Open quarter-finals. The 35-year-old Spanish left-hander eliminated the US lucky loser 6-0, 6-3, advancing to a Thursday match against 39th-ranked American Tommy Paul, whom he has never played before. "Always it's important to win as quick as possible, but the most important thing is to win," Nadal said. "Tonight has been straight sets. That's great news and I'll try to be ready for tomorrow again against a tough opponent." The victory kept Nadal unbeaten over a dozen matches in 2022, his best career start to any year, surpassing the 11-0 run in 2014 that ended with a loss to Swiss Stan Wawrinka in the Australian Open final. Nadal won his men's record 21st Grand Slam title at last month's Australian Open, breaking the career mark of 20 Slam crowns he had shared with Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer. World number five Nadal, seeking his 91st career ATP title and fourth Acapulco crown, also won a warm-up tournament last month in Melbourne. Nadal broke for a 2-0 lead when Kozlov netted a backhand and broke again on forehand smashes in the fourth and sixth games to sweep the opening set in 32 minutes. Another forehand smash to break put Nadal ahead 3-1 in the second set but Kozlov broke back within 4-3 when Nadal netted a backhand volley. Kozlov handed back the break in the next game on a botched backhand and Nadal held serve once more to advance after 76 minutes. "A little bit of a strange match," Nadal said. "Kozlov has a different style than most other players, so you need to be very careful."

PM Imran
concerned...

FROM PAGE 01

future. He added that the trust and cordiality marking the relationship would translate into further deepening and broadening of mutual cooperation in diverse fields. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the importance of Pakistan-Stream Gas Pipeline as a flagship economic project between Pakistan and Russia and also discussed cooperation on prospective energy-related projects. The Prime Minister underscored Pakistan's commitment to forge a long-term, multidimensional relationship with Russia.

In the regional context, the Prime Minister underlined the urgency of addressing the humanitarian crisis and preventing potential economic meltdown in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister reiterated that Pakistan would continue to work with the international community for a stable, peaceful and connected Afghanistan. In this regard, he underscored the ongoing cooperation and coordination between Pakistan and Russia at various international and regional fora, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). On the situation in South Asia, the Prime Minister highlighted the serious human rights situation in IIOJK and underscored the imperative of peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The Prime Minister also highlighted the developments detrimental to regional peace and stability and stressed the need for measures that would help keep the regional balance. The Prime Minister regretted the latest situation between Russia and Ukraine and said that Pakistan had hoped diplomacy could avert a military conflict. The Prime Minister stressed that conflict was not in anyone's interest, and that the developing countries were always hit the hardest economically in case of conflict. He underlined Pakistan's belief that disputes should be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

Expressing concerns on rising trends of extremism and Islamophobia in the world, the Prime Minister emphasized the need for interfaith harmony and coexistence. Appreciating President Putin's understanding of the respect and sensitivities that the Muslims attach to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the Prime Minister said that interfaith harmony and respect for all religions was imperative for peace and harmony within and among the societies. The Prime Minister along with high-level delegation is on a two-day visit to the Russian Federation from 23-24 February 2022. The Prime Minister is accompanied by cabinet members and senior officials.

Russia
invades...

FROM PAGE 01

of the aggressors were shot down," the army general staff said. Russian President Vladimir Putin made an early morning call to his Belarusian counterpart Thursday, informing him that Moscow was launching a military operation on Ukraine, Alexander Lukashenko's office said. "Around 5 am (0200 GMT) today there was a telephone conversation between the presidents of Belarus and Russia," Lukashenko's office said. "During the call, Vladimir Putin informed his Belarusian colleague about the situation on the border with Ukraine and in Donbas." The Kremlin had no statement on the call. Putin launched the offensive in the early hours of Thursday, after a surprise televised address. Dozens of people have been killed during the first hours of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, officials said, with fighting widespread across the country. Sirens rang out in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, and large explosions were heard there and in other cities. Oleksii Arestovich, an adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said more than 40 Ukrainian soldiers had been killed and dozens were wounded in the first hours of the invasion, and that up to 10 civilians had been killed. The mayor of Mariupol claimed that three civilians had been killed in the eastern port city and six others injured amid Russia's invasion. Emergency services said a boy was killed in eastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region after shelling struck an apartment building. Ukraine's military said it had destroyed four Russian tanks on a road near the eastern city of Kharkiv, killed 50 troops near a town in the Luhansk region and downed six Russian warplanes elsewhere in the east.

Islamabad United eliminates Zalmi from PSL-7

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Islamabad United beat Peshawar Zalmi by 5 wickets in the first eliminator. Peshawar Zalmi have handed Islamabad United a 170-target with both Kamran Akmal and Shoaib Malik scoring fifties in the eliminator one clash of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2022 against Islamabad United at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. The United bowlers kept things tight as Zalmi batters didn't score runs quickly, as they lost in-form opener Mohammed Harris for 12 runs by Faheem Ashraf. Opener Kamran Akmal contin-

ued to carve out runs, while Yasir Khan was also removed for eight runs. Karman got out for 58 runs by United skipper Shadab Khan with Zalmi's score of 98 runs on the board. Shoaib Malik and Hussain Talat forged a crucial 56 runs stand to take Zalmi to the 150 run mark. Hussain scored 28 runs, while Malik scored 55. For United, Hasan Ali took three wickets for 30 runs in four overs, while Shadab and Faheem picked one. Earlier, Zalmi had won the toss and elected to bat first against United. Wahab Riaz is leading Zalmi, while Islamabad United are being led by Shadab Khan who is returning from an injury.



Briefs

Baltic states decry Russian intervention

SOFIA: The three Baltic nations and Bulgaria and Georgia on Thursday denounced Russia's military intervention in Ukraine. The foreign ministers of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – the Baltic states – issued a joint statement condemning the "strongest possible way the open large-scale Russian aggression against the independent, peaceful, and democratic Ukraine." Stressing that "this act of aggression is not acceptable," the statement said Russia's attack on Ukraine is a "blatant violation of the international law, of all international norms, and a crime against Ukrainian people." They urged the international community to impose the strongest possible sanctions on Moscow, including Russia's exclusion from the international payments communication system SWIFT. Bulgarian President Rumen Radev and Prime Minister Kiril Petkov both condemned Russia's "absolutely unacceptable" military intervention in Ukraine. At a joint news conference, Radev said his country's doors are open to Bulgarians in Ukraine and to Ukrainian citizens seeking asylum. "We strongly condemn the actions of the Russian Federation. Bulgaria will take a joint stance with NATO against this unacceptable attempt," Petkov added. Georgian President Salome Zurbishvili expressed support for Ukraine and called for a stop to Russian aggression. "Georgian nation shocked by the Russian aggression in Ukraine. We stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people and call for a halt of the military operations," she said on Twitter. – APP

Africa races towards 70% vaccination goal

BRAZZAVILLE: Vaccination rates in Africa remain the lowest in the world, as the continent is "racing towards" the target of vaccinating 70 percent of its population, said the World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday. One year since the COVAX Facility delivered the first COVID-19 vaccines to Africa, around 400 million doses have been administered, the continent's largest ever vaccine rollout in a single year, said in a statement Matshidiso Moeti, WHO regional director for Africa. However, vaccination rates in the continent are the lowest in the world, as only 13 percent of Africans are fully vaccinated. Eighteen countries have vaccinated less than 10 percent of their population and three have vaccinated less than 1 percent. Twenty-nine countries have used less than 50 percent of their vaccine stock, according to the statement. – APP

UK pledges £160mln to global vaccine drive

LONDON: Britain on Thursday pledged an extra £160 million to boost global vaccine development, with the aim of being able to produce a global shot within 100 days of any future pandemic. The money will be on top of the £276 million (\$374 million, 330 million euros) that Britain has already given to the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a global partnership launched in 2017 to develop vaccines to stop future outbreaks. "This pandemic is a global challenge and it has shown the best way to chart a course back to freedom is by standing side by side with our international partners," said British health minister Sajid Javid. "Our £160 million pledge will support CEPI's vital work to cut vaccine development to 100 days and protect us all against future health threats". The announcement came ahead of the Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit in London on March 7 and 8, which will be attended by leading global politicians, WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and Anthony Fauci, chief medical advisor to US President Joe Biden. The event aims to raise funds for CEPI's goal to develop "variant-proof" vaccines that will work against multiple future COVID-19 strains. – APP

Importance of human rights in EU relations with Pakistan

The Project included the development of a five-year strategic vision for the Ministry of Human Rights and the design of human rights policies and implementation frameworks for Gilgit-Baltistan, Balochistan and Sindh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: European Union representatives, key stakeholders and government officials came together at the final steering committee and the closing event to share the journey and results of the EU funded Huqooq-e-Pakistan (HeP) Project. Initiated in 2019, the HeP Project was a joint initiative between the European Union and the Ministry of Human Rights to support the continued efforts of the Govern-

ment of Pakistan to promote human rights. The project contributed to strengthen the institutional and policy framework at the federal and provincial levels to promote and protect human rights. The project included the development of a five-year strategic vision for the Ministry of Human Rights and the design of human rights policies and implementation frameworks for Gilgit-Baltistan, Balochistan and Sindh. The project team developed six training modules, which helped increase knowledge and skills of 148 govern-

ment officers on Pakistan's International Human Rights obligations and what these obligations stand for. 606 officials and 218 public prosecutors from Sindh and 278 officials and 102 public prosecutors from Balochistan were trained on 'Human Rights Safeguards in the Administration of Justice.' The training modules have been incorporated in the permanent curriculum of the Sindh and Balochistan Judicial Academies and the Prosecution Departments. Support was provided to the Ministry of Human Rights,

National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR), National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and National Commission for the Rights of Children (NCRC) in increasing their digital outreach. The project developed the Human Rights Information Resource Portal for the Ministry. Awareness-raising interventions on the rights of women, children, transgender, minorities and vulnerable segments of the society at the provincial and federal level took place. Campaigns on TV, radio, print and digital platforms reached more

than 166 million persons. In his closing remarks, Inamullah Khan, Federal Secretary Ministry of Human Rights Inamullah Khan, Federal Secretary Ministry of Human Rights commended EU Delegation for greatly contributing towards promotion of human rights in Pakistan. He appreciated the project team for its achievements despite the challenges. "I am confident these activities will become of an institutional part of MoHR in its future strategy and framework," he said. Thomas Seiler, Deputy Head

of the Mission of the European Union underlined the importance of a continued dialogue of the EU with Pakistan on HR and fundamental freedoms. He added: "This is also highlighted by the ongoing visit to Pakistan of the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, Mr Eamon Gilmore. The EU plans to continue to work together with the Government of Pakistan, and with human rights institutions at federal and provincial levels as part of the bilateral cooperation and explore options for a follow-up programme based on lessons learned."



MOSCOW: Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pakistani Foreign Minister in a meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov along with delegation. – DNA

Queen cancels virtual audiences due to Covid

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth II cancelled two engagements on Thursday after she tested positive for coronavirus at the weekend, Buckingham Palace said. "The two virtual audiences that had previously been scheduled to take place today will now be rescheduled for a later date," a spokesman said. Royal officials announced on Sunday that the 95-year-old head of state had tested positive and had "mild" Covid symptoms, but would continue with "light duties". Her eldest son and heir, Prince Charles, tested positive for the second time since early 2020 on February 10, two days after meeting his mother at Windsor Castle. – APP

US asks Imran to play part in averting Ukraine conflict

WASHINGTON: The visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Moscow on a prescheduled bilateral visit attained greater significance, as the United States urged him to play his part in averting a "costly" and "destabilizing conflict, following Russia-Ukraine clash. The United States said it has been in touch with Islamabad on the escalating crisis. "We believe it's the responsibility of every responsible country around the world to voice concern, to voice objection to what (President Vladimir) Putin appears to have in mind for Ukraine," State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters in response to a question at his daily briefing on Wednesday. PM Imran Khan arrived in Moscow Wednesday to meet President Putin and discuss a range of issues, including economic cooperation. His visit takes place hours after the US and a number

Tayyip Erdogan denounces Russia invasion as 'heavy blow' to peace

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Thursday denounced Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a "heavy blow" to regional peace. "We reject Russia's military operation," Erdogan said in a televised speech, calling it a "heavy blow to regional peace and stability". Erdogan, whose government has friendly ties with Russia and Ukraine, had positioned Turkey, a member of NATO, as a neutral mediator for a resolution to the crisis. He expressed "sincere sadness" over the fact that the two countries "with which we have close political, economic and social ties" were confronting each other. Erdogan earlier today chaired a security summit in the capital Ankara after Moscow launched an attack on its neighbour. The summit concluded that Russia's attack was "a violation of international law" and "unacceptable", according to the presidency. It also discussed measures that can be taken with Russia and on international platforms for an "end to the attack that threatens regional and global security". Turkey "will continue to support Ukraine's political unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity", it said. In a separate statement, the foreign ministry urged Moscow to stop its "unjust and unlawful" invasion immediately. – Agencies

of Western nations slapped Russia with new sanctions for its military deployment into parts of eastern Ukraine. "We've communicated to Pakistan our position regarding Russia's further renewed invasion of Ukraine, and we have briefed them on our efforts to pursue diplomacy over war," the spokesman said, while underscoring United States' "longstanding partnership and cooperation" with Pakistan. "We view our partnership with a prosperous, with a democratic Pakistan as critical to U.S. interests. And we certainly hope, when it comes to those shared interests – the aversion of a costly conflict, the aversion of a destabilizing conflict, that every country around the world would make that point clearly in unambiguous language in their engagements with the Russian Federation," Price added. – Agencies

Azerbaijan demands International justice for Khojaly genocide

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Human Rights Commissioner Sabina Aliyeva has urged the world community and relevant international agencies to adequately respond to the brutal act committed in Azerbaijan's Khojaly, recognize it as a genocide and bring its instigators and perpetrators to justice. She made the remarks in a statement to international agencies on the eve of the 30th anniversary of the Khojaly genocide. Aliyeva has called for effective and drastic international sanctions against Armenia for flagrant violations of international humanitarian law, as well as increased pressure on the responsible state to provide information about the fate of Azerbaijani citizens who have been taken prisoner, hostage, or gone missing. "Thirty years have passed since the Khojaly genocide, which entered into history as one of the most horrific tragedies of the 20th century and a grave crime against humanity," she said. Aliyeva stressed that hundreds of thousands of civilians have been massacred and expelled from their native lands as a result of Armenia's ethnic cleansing and genocide policies against Azerbaijanis throughout history. In the statement, she addressed the facts of the brutal murder of people in Khojaly, noting that Armenian armed groups committed massacres in Azerbaijani settlements, the most horrific of which occurred in Khojaly while operating in an environment of impunity. She emphasized that February 26 was declared the Day of the Khojaly Genocide and that the truth about the genocide was conveyed to the international community in 1994, at the initiative of late national leader Heydar Aliyev.

Turkish, Armenian officials hold 2nd meeting in Vienna

ANKARA: The second meeting between special envoys from Turkey and Armenia to discuss steps for normalizing ties between the two countries was held in Vienna on Thursday. A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement announced the meeting between the special representatives of Turkey and Armenia, "respectively, Ambassador Serdar Kilic and Deputy Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Ruben Rubinyan," in the Austrian capital. The statement said the Turkish and Armenian envoys have "confirmed that the ultimate goal of the negotiations is to achieve full normalization" between the two countries as agreed during their first meeting in Moscow. – APP



MINSK: Pakistan ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan meets ambassador of Russia to Belarus Boris Gryzlov. Both sides discussed bilateral relations in the backdrop of ongoing visit by PM Imran to Russia, hoped broadening of coop in numerous fields. – DNA

World expresses outrage, plans stronger sanctions

French President Emmanuel Macron says France and its European allies did everything to try to head off the attack on Ukraine. He said that they will show "no weakness" in their response

BRUSSELS: World leaders expressed a raw outrage shrouded by an impotence to immediately come to the aid of Ukraine to avoid a major war in Europe, condemning Russia's attack on its neighbor as the European Union and others promised unprecedented sanctions to hit the Kremlin. NATO has moved to beef up its eastern flank facing Russia and planned a virtual leaders' summit for Friday after President Vladimir Putin warned anyone listening that any interference would "lead to consequences you have never seen in history." EU and NATO member Lithuania declared a state of emergency since the Baltic nation borders Russia's

Kaliningrad region to the southwest and Russia's ally Belarus to the east. NATO nations have 100 jets and 120 ships on high alert as deterrence. "Make no mistake: we will defend every ally against any attack on every inch of NATO territory," said NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen called it a "barbaric attack" on an independent nation that also targeted "the stability in Europe and the whole of the international peace order." The EU will hold an emergency summit in Brussels. But no one promised to move in militarily and defend Ukraine as it could

touch off a major European war. So instead, most of the world – but not China – condemned and threatened to hit the Russian elites with, in the words of Von der Leyen – "massive and targeted sanctions." She will put to EU leaders late Thursday

a proposal that "will target strategic sectors of the Russian economy by blocking the access to technologies and markets that are key for Russia." Italian Premier Mario Draghi says Russia's attack on Ukraine has made dia-

logue with Moscow "impossible." He is demanding that Putin "immediately stop the bloodshed and withdraw military forces." French President Emmanuel Macron says France and its European allies did everything to try to head off the attack on Ukraine. He said that they will show "no weakness" in their response. Macron said in a televised address to the nation Thursday that Russia's attack is a "turning point in European history" and as a result "there will be profound consequences for our continent and changes in our lives." The Slovak government has authorized the deployment of up to 1,500 soldiers to

help guard the border with Ukraine following Russia's attack on Slovakia's eastern neighbor. Latvian authorities say three Russian television channels will have their right to broadcast in Latvia suspended for several years with immediate effect. They cited the channels' incitement to hatred against Ukraine, justification of war and spreading of disinformation on Ukraine, Latvia and other countries. The head of the U.N. refugee agency is warning of "devastating consequences" of Russia's military action in Ukraine and calling on neighboring countries to keep their borders open for people fleeing the fighting.



Oil breaches \$100 as Russia attacks Ukraine

NEW YORK: Crude oil and natural gas prices have soared amid investor concerns that Russian aggression against Ukraine would hurt exports from Russia, one of the world's largest oil and gas exporters. Global benchmark Brent crude oil futures scaled the \$100 a barrel mark on Wednesday for the first time since 2014 after Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a military attack on Ukraine. The latest escalation in the Ukrainian crisis cast a gloom on global stock markets, which tumbled as investors took refuge in safe havens like gold, US Treasury bonds, the US dollar and the Japanese yen. Russian forces attacked several targets across Ukraine after Putin ordered strikes on Ukrainian military installations, an assault that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy described as a "cynical invasion." US President Joe Biden has warned that Washington and its allies would impose "severe sanctions" on Moscow. "The market reaction to these developments has been seismic," Deutsche Bank analyst Jim Reid said in a note "there had been a more positive tone 24 hours ago during the European morning, but that turned shortly after the US open, after news came through from Ukraine that numerous websites had suffered a distributed denial-of-service attack." European stocks fell 3% in early trading on Thursday with the benchmark STOXX 600 index falling to its lowest level since May 2021 amid concerns that the Russian offensive and ensuing Western sanctions would lead to further fuel price rises and hurt the global economic recovery. Germany's DAX was among the biggest losers in the region, reflecting the country's heavy reliance on Russia for its energy needs. – APP

Palestinians call on Israel to 'end apartheid'

UNITED NATIONS: The Palestinian envoy to the United Nations on Wednesday urged the Security Council to stop Israel from discriminating against Palestinians, wearing a black mask emblazoned with the phrase "End Apartheid." Speaking at a monthly meeting on the Middle East, Riyad Mansour evoked the term "apartheid" 15 times and called on the Council to protect "our long-suffering people." "This Council may not be ready to use the word, but apartheid is, and has been, for a while now, our reality," said the Palestinian envoy. "Israel may be outraged by the word," Mansour said, but he added that "everyone else should be outraged by the policy." "Condemnations alone will never suffice to deter Israel," he said. "It is time to translate your words into actions. Actions to end apartheid." – APP

Brazil storm death toll passes 200: police

RIO DE JANEIRO: The death toll from flash floods and landslides caused by torrential rain in the Brazilian city of Petropolis has surpassed 200, authorities said Wednesday, as they continue to recover bodies more than a week after the storm. Around 51 people are still missing, but that number is expected to go down as bodies are identified and families are reunited, police said. Among the 204 bodies recovered, 188 had been identified as of Wednesday, Rio de Janeiro police said. Some 800 people were being housed in emergency shelters after the deluge left their homes damaged or destroyed. The February 15 downpour turned streets in the picturesque tourist town north of Rio de Janeiro into violent rivers, the water taking cars, trees and soil along with it. Officials are still waging a massive clean-up operation to clear the mud, rubble and stranded vehicles strewn around Petropolis, a city of 300,000 people that was the 19th-century summer capital of the Brazilian empire. The storm, which dropped more than a month's worth of rain in a few hours, is now the deadliest in the city's history. – APP

Briefs

Pak pursuing agenda of promoting regional links: FM

DNA

MOSCOW: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Thursday said that Pakistan in line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan was pursuing the agenda of promoting economic priorities and regional links. He said that Pakistan accorded special importance to bilateral relations with Russia, adding, bilateral ties between Pakistan and Russia have strengthened. The Foreign Minister expressed these views during the meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov along with the delegation. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on various subjects including the bilateral relations, enhanced cooperation in the areas of mutual interest and important regional and international matters. As Foreign Minister Lavrov welcomed his Pakistani counterpart to Moscow, the two sides reviewed the whole range of Pakistan-Russia bilateral relations and reiterated their commitment to further strengthen the bilateral ties.

Oil breaches \$100 for first time since 2014

WEB DESK

BEIJING: Oil breached \$100 a barrel for the first time since 2014 on Thursday as Russia moved troops into Ukraine, sparking concerns that a war in Europe could disrupt global energy supplies. Russia has launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine and is targeting cities with weapons strikes, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said in a tweet. Brent crude LCOc hit a high of \$101.34 a barrel in early Asia trade, the loftiest since September 2014, and was at \$101.20 a barrel at 0423 GMT, up \$4.36, or 4.5%. US WTI crude CL1 futures jumped \$4.22, or 4.6%, to \$96.32 a barrel, after rising to as much as \$96.51, also the highest since August 2014. Russian President Vladimir Putin authorised a military operation in eastern Ukraine on Thursday in what could be the start of war in Europe over Russia's demands for an end to NATO's eastward expansion.

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Shakil Ahmed of Shakil Express hosted a reception at Islamabad Serena Hotel for the former Maldives High Commissioner to Pakistan Ahmed Salim and his wife who are visiting Pakistan these days. Those who attended the reception included High Commissioner of Maldives Farzana Zahir, High Commissioner of Bangladesh Ruhul Alam Siddique, Ambassador of Vietnam Nguyen Tien Phong, Charge d Affaires of Indian High Commission Dr Suresh, DHM of Nepal Embassy Mr. Paras, Defence Attache of Maldives Col Idress Badeeu, Dr. Abrar ul Hasnain and Editor of Daily Islamabad POST/CENTRELINE and DNA News Agency Ansar Mahmood Bhatti. – Photo Shahid Raju

Students asked to donate blood in Ukraine

DNA

KIEV: Students have been asked to donate blood in the wake of ongoing war in Ukraine. FLOWING IS a letter sent to all students. "Dear students and staff of the Academic and Research Medical Institute! As a result of the aggression of the Russian Federation, the work of all structures of the institute is online. I ask everyone to keep calm, pack an «anxious» bag and to have the necessary minimum of food. For students of the institute living in hostels No 4, No 5, temporary shelters in basements are arranged. I urge both ukrainian and foreign students not to leave Sumy before stabilization of the situation. Sumy is under the control of the military, police and territorial defense forces. I invite everyone who wants to support the Ukrainian military to donate blood at the regional blood service center". This message was stated by Director of Medical institute Andriy LOBODA.

Pak-Saudia joint exercise underway

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The two-week long Pakistan and Kingdom of KS) Joint Exercise AL-SAMSAAM-VIII-22 is underway at National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), Pabbi. The joint exercise was a series of ongoing bilateral military exercises between the Saudi Forces and Pakistan Army, said an ISPR news release. The Joint Exercise would focus on counter-terrorism operations including cordon and search, combat patrols and dealing with improvised explosive devices (IEDs). It provided participating troops an opportunity to benchmark their respective operational practices and procedures as well as learn from each other's experiences. AL-SAMSAAM exercises are being conducted on biennial basis

'Order in Monal case after detailed judgment of IHC'

ISLAMABAD: The SC said it may issue an appropriate order in case the Islamabad high court does not issue detailed judgment in Monal case. The apex court further said since the detailed judgment was not in front of them that is why the court was not in a position to provide immediate relief to the applicants, however if there is no detailed verdict after two weeks then an order may be passed. – DNA

UN chief warns Russian actions could devastate

Ukraine's ambassador at the United Nations has told the Security Council that Russian President Vladimir Putin has "declared war on Ukraine"

WEB DESK

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres says Russia's attack on Ukraine – as he appealed for President Vladimir Putin to stop his troops – was "the saddest moment" of his five-year tenure. The U.N. chief opened the emergency Security Council meeting late Wednesday by urgently appealing to Putin: "In the name of humanity, bring your troops back to Russia." But during the meeting, Putin announced that he was launching a "special military operation" in eastern Ukraine. Guterres later urged the

Russian president to withdraw his troops and added: "In the name of humanity do not allow to start in Europe what could be the worst war since the beginning of the century, with consequences not only devastating for Ukraine, not only tragic for the Russian Federation, but with an impact we cannot even foresee in relation to the consequences for the global economy." A war would cause deaths and displacement



and people will lose hope in the future, Guterres said, adding Russia's actions would harm the global economy. "What is clear for me is that this war doesn't make any sense," Guterres said, stressing that it violates the U.N. Charter and will cause a level of suffering if it doesn't stop that Europe hasn't know since at least the 1990s Balkans crisis. In the recent past, Guterres says, he never

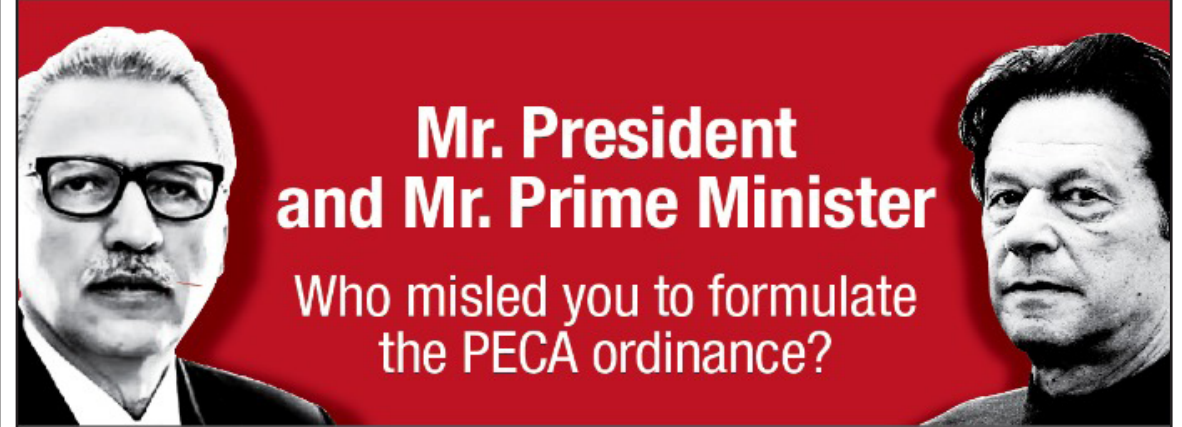
believed rumors that Russia would invade Ukraine and was "convinced that nothing serious would happen." But, he adds: "I was wrong, and I like not to be wrong again. So if indeed an operation is being prepared I have only one thing to say from the bottom of my heart: Stop your troops from attacking Ukraine. Give peace a chance. Too many people have already died." Ukraine's ambassador at the United Nations has told the Security Council that Russian President Vladimir Putin has "declared war on Ukraine." He also pressed his Russian counterpart to state that Russia will not shell and bomb Ukrainian cities.

PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira praises quality of Islamabad POST

GULZAR NOSHI



LALAMUSA: Former Federal Information Minister and senior PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira has appreciated the quality of daily Islamabad POST wishing the newspaper a success even in the days to come. Qamar Zaman Kaira said it was indeed a challenging job to bring out a daily newspaper especially during the pandemic. He appreciated the work of Editor Ansar Mahmood Bhatti and said it was indeed a matter of pride for Lalamura as well because Ansar, the Editor originally belongs to Lalamura. Qamar Zaman Kaira also briefly talked about long march plans and hoped the movement will do away with what he termed the despotic rule of the present government, in which people had been forced to even take their own lives simply because they had nothing to eat. He came heavy on the government for increasing prices of fuel and daily use items. Kaira said the opposition parties were united in their struggle against the sitting government.



“...country has not seen such oppressive restriction even in the worst dictatorships.”
Supreme Court Bar Association

“reflective of fascist and dictatorial regimes”
The Sindh High Court Bar Association

“All media bodies have committed to fight this on all forums. Information ministry is only interested in sheltering the government from criticism”
Joint Action Committee (PBA, APNS, CPNE, PFIJ, AEMEND)

“undemocratic and will inevitably be used to clamp down on dissenters and critics of the government...”
The Human Rights Commission Of Pakistan

But that's not all...

“Withdraw the recently promulgated Prevention of Electronic Crimes (Amendment) Act ordinance 2022.”
Serving Minister of IT Syed Amin ul Haq

“The PECA (amendment) ordinance will be draconian if it will come into force as it is. This law will be regulated for enforcement.”
Serving Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Khalid Javed Khan

“There should be no defamation law for public representatives”
Islamabad High Court

Mr. Fawad Chaudhry
Who is responsible for the damage caused to Prime Minister's reputation by your PECA Ordinance?



'Khojaly genocide is a dark chapter in human history'

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Muslim Institute and the Azerbaijani Embassy in Islamabad jointly organized a seminar on "Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing: A Crime against Humanity, the 30th Anniversary of the Khojaly genocide". Among the speakers were Federal Minister for Food Security and Research, Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan, Dewan of Junagadh and Chairman MUSLIM Institute Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, Ambassador of Turkey Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul, Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and Vice

Chancellor, Quaid-e-Azam University Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah. The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia over Nagorno-Karabakh is one of the most contentious issues of the twentieth century. Armenian nationalists have been following a policy of ethnic cleansing of the Azerbaijani people for the last 200 years. From 1948 to 1953, around 150,000 Azerbaijanis were deported from Armenia. Similarly, in 1988, 250,000 Azerbaijanis were forced out from their historical territories thereby leaving Armenia a mono-ethnic state. In February 1992, Armenian forces seized the Azeri-populated town of Khojaly. Armenian militants started the massacre of civilians in Na-

gorno-Karabakh. Despite the Armenian occupation and genocide, the people of Azerbaijan remained steadfast, and as a result of the 2020 Armenian aggression, war broke out again and Armenia had to concede defeat after 44 days of conflict. The speakers said that Pakistan and Azerbaijan were two brotherly Islamic countries which were closely related to each other in the spirit of Islam. Pakistan has always supported the principle stance of Azerbaijan on Nagorno-Karabakh, that's why Pakistan has not recognized Armenia till date. This position of Pakistan is in fact in line with the ideas of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov briefs the Energy Minister Omar Ayub Khan about the Khojaly massacre. – DNA