



Islamabad POST

Thursday, March 10, 2022

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EU needs to redefine its overall defense strategy: Estonian PM

Detailed News On Page-07

Four PTI Sindh MPAs voted for Nisar Khuhro

Detailed News On Page-08



Novak Djokovic entered on Indian Wells draw

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

No progress sans women inclusion

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Wednesday while calling for women's active participation and struggle for their rights, said that the country could never achieve development until its women enjoyed their due rights as well as financial and digital empowerment. The president, addressing Kamyab Khatoon ceremony held by Kamyab Jawan Program in connection with World Women's Day, also advised the girls and women to show their leadership skills to claim their rights guaranteed by Islam as well as the constitution. - APP

Corrupt politicians to be held accountable

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Wednesday asked the trio of opposition parties' leaders including Shehbaz Sharif and others to get ready for facing consequences of their corruption. "Three political orphans should not dream about their return to the power, rather make preparations for going to Central Jail Adiala which is their final abode," the minister tweeted entailing a video which recapped differences among the leaders of Pakistan People's Party and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz in past. - APP

PPP's Nisar wins Senate by-poll

KARACHI: PPP's Nisar Khuhro Wednesday won the Senate by-polls in Sindh, Geo News reported, on a seat that fell vacant after former federal minister Faisal Vawda's disqualification. Khuhro won the seat after bagging 99 votes out of 101. Meanwhile, two votes were rejected, sources told. Shortly after the announcement of Khuhro's win, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari took to his Twitter handle to congratulate the party member. "Congratulations, Senator elect, Nisar Ahmad Khuhro," wrote Bilawal.

No-trust doomed to fail: Imran

Says Asif Zardari is my next target; terms no confidence move as 'Oppositions political demise'

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday said the no-confidence move against him would turn out to be the 'political demise' of the Opposition. The prime minister was addressing a rally of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf workers here at Governor House during his day-long visit to the metropolitan. The prime minister said by submitting the no-confidence motion, the Opposition had taken the step, which he had been longing for. "I have been waiting for this moment. Now they have been trapped as their no-confidence motion is going to rebound on them," he said. He warned the Opposition that he would not spare the 'thieves' who had plundered the national wealth and said that he had been waging war against corruption for the last 25 years. Khan said his first 'target' would be the Pakistan People's Party co-chairperson Asif Ali Zardari for his involvement in corruption and money laundering. He said Zardari was focused on buying loyalties of the members of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf,

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PM meets MQM-P, GDA leaders in Karachi

STAFF REPORT

KARACHI: Prime Minister Imran Khan arrived in Karachi on Wednesday, a day after the joint opposition submitted a no-confidence motion against him with the National Assembly Secretariat, and held a meeting with the leadership of Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA), allies of his government in the Centre. The premier was received by PTI and MQM-P members upon his arrival at the latter's temporary headquarters in Bahadurabad. He was accompanied by

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Fawad wants NA session 'immediately'

Chaudhry claims that the PTI has the support of at least 184 lawmakers



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry on Wednesday called upon the speaker of the National Assembly to convene a session of the lower house "as soon as possible" in order to "wrap up" the opposition's no-confidence motion against the prime minister, adding that the country was not in a position to afford political chaos for a long time. The opposition on Tuesday had submitted in the National Assembly Secretariat a no-confidence motion against the prime minister and also requisitioned

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the National Assembly because it is not in session currently. After this requisition, the speaker has a maximum of 14 days to summon the session, which means he must call the lower house in session by March 22. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Chaudhry claimed that the PTI had the support of at least 184 lawmakers in the National Assembly - sufficient to doom the opposition's motion. "I challenge the opposition to bring the motion to House if they have 172 numbers," the minister said as he addressed a press



KARACHI: Prime Minister Imran Khan meets senior leadership of MQM. - DNA

Active Covid-19 cases below 20,000
Country reports 758 new cases and six deaths during last 24 hours

KHAYAM ABBASI

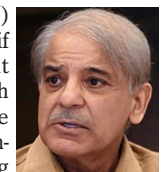
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's active COVID-19 case count fell below the 20,000 mark after the number of recoveries saw a drastic increase as 12,103 patients suffering from the virus recovered overnight, the National Command and Operation data showed Wednesday morning. On Tuesday, the number of active coronavirus cases in Pakistan was at 29,346. After the major decline, the country's active case count dropped to 17,995, the lowest since January 11 when it stood at 18,947. This number had only surged ever since, even crossing the 100,000 mark as the fifth wave of COVID-19 tightened its grip over the country. However, the coronavirus statistics gradually declined after this as the wave subsided. Meanwhile, 758 new infections were detected during the last 24 hours when the national COVID-19 body conducted 36,569 diagnostic tests across the country.

Shehbaz says in contact with parties in Punjab

Requests JI to support opposition's no-confidence motion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LAHORE: President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Mian Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that they are in contact with parties for no-confidence motion in Punjab. Shehbaz Sharif, while talking to media persons along with JI head Siraj-ul-Haq, said that the opposition will dislodge the selected government through constitutional means. Shehbaz Sharif said that in politics nothing is final and it's their right to contact all political parties. PML-N President further said that he has requested JI to support opposition's no-confidence motion. On the occasion, Siraj-ul-Haq said that his party will take the decision after consulting leadership of the party. Meanwhile, PML-Q, an ally party of PTI government



Opposition leaders fire back at PM's tirade

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: PML-N spokesperson Mariyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday that Prime Minister Imran Khan had realized his defeat was near as now that feeling was becoming increasingly evident from his manners of speech and facial expressions. In a statement, she said PM Imran's speech at Governor House in Karachi on Wednesday was a proof that his political career was over. "The way he has threatened his political

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Hajj Policy after KSA agreement

ISLAMABAD: The Hajj Policy 2022 would be unveiled after signing an agreement with the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah, an official said Wednesday. "It is good news for all Muslims that the Saudi government opened Hajj for foreign pilgrims across the world after a two-year hiatus," an official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony told APP. He said the Hajj policy would be designed as per the revised pilgrims' quota - expected to be announced soon by the Saudi government. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan meets with Air Marshal Arshad Malik, CEO of Pakistan International Airlines. - DNA

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Russia, Ukraine agree ceasefire for evacuation

However, Ukraine accused Russia of breaking a ceasefire to prevent the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of civilians trapped in the besieged port of Mariupol

CENTRELINE REPORT

KYIV: Russia has said it will temporarily stop military advances to allow evacuations, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said in a briefing Wednesday. Russia has committed to observe the ceasefire from 09:00 to 21:00 local time (2 a.m. to 2 p.m. ET) along several humanitarian corridors, including Enerhodar to Zaporizhia, Sumy to Poltava and Mariupol to Zaporizhia, Vereshchuk said. Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council said there would be a special operation to allow children and staff members from an orphanage in the village of Vorzel to leave the area. The International Committee of the Red Cross said Wednesday it had confirmed the humanitarian corridor routes from the Russian side, Vereshchuk said.

Ukraine accused Russian forces of violating a cease-fire agreement on Tuesday by shelling a humanitarian corridor from Zaporizhia to Mariupol as buses waited to collect evacuees. Russian forces continued to shell major Ukrainian cities but have yet to make significant breakthroughs in the capital of Kyiv, according to the British defense ministry. "Fighting north-west of Kyiv remains ongoing," the ministry said in an intelligence update published Wednesday. The Ukrainian air defense system has also held up against Russia's aerial forces, preventing them from achieving "any degree of control of the air," the ministry said. However, the cities of Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Sumy and Mariupol remain encircled and are suffering heavy Russian shelling, it said. Russia has also reportedly destroyed a children's hospital in the be-

Zelensky urges West to resolve Polish jet offer

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called on Wednesday for Western powers to urgently resolve on a Polish offer that would see his country supplied with fighter jets, but Germany and Canada poured cold water on the idea. "When will there be a decision? Look, we're at war!" Zelensky said in a video on his Telegram channel. "We ask you again to decide as soon as possible. Send us planes." On Tuesday, the United States rejected a plan put forward by Poland to send its fleet of Soviet-era MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine via a US air base in Ramstein, Germany. Poland had suggested that its air force would receive F-16 fighters as replacements. "We have seen in the media that there are discussions between the American and Polish sides. But we sense that the Polish offer is not supported," said Zelensky. "We don't have time for the media, for all these signals. This isn't ping-pong. It's human lives," he added. Although the United States and European allies have supplied Ukraine with weapons, including anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles, they have stopped short of sending fighter jets for fear of triggering a wider conflict with Russia. - APP



sieged port city of Mariupol in the south-east of Ukraine, the city council says. In a statement issued on Facebook, officials say that "Russian occupying forces have dropped several bombs on the children's hospital. The destruction is colossal". Council officials added that they do not yet know exact casualty numbers. "The maternity ward in the city centre, the children's ward and the therapy ward at the hospital - all destroyed in a Russian air raid on Mariupol," the head of the regional military administration, Pavlo Kyrylenko, said in a Facebook video. He added that those wounded in the strike are being evacuated to the nearest hospital. The BBC cannot independently verify the allegations, but a local MP, Dmytro Gurin, repeated the claims during an interview with the corporation.

Int'l Women's Day celebrated in Gujrat

Commissioner Ehsan pays surprise visit to hospital

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: International Women's Day was celebrated in full swing in Gujrat district as well as across the country. Awareness walk and seminar were organized on this occasion which were attended by Deputy Commissioner Dr. Khurram Shehzad, District Officer Population Welfare Mr. Hassan Khalid Warraich, Deputy Director Social Welfare Mrs. Samman Ijaz, Medical Superintendent Social Security Hospital Dr. Tariq Bashir, Dr. Kanwal Tabassum, Dr. Qudsiya, Dr. Munazza and other officers and women from various walks of life. As per the directions of Punjab Government, the main function of International Women's Day

was organized by Population Welfare Department at Social Security Hospital under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner. Dr. Khurram Shehzad.

Commissioner Ehsan Bhutta pays surprise visit to hospital
Commissioner Gujranwala Division Mr. Ehsan Bhutta paid a surprise visit to Aziz Bhatti Shaheed Hospital Monday night. He inspected Trauma Center, Burn Unit, Emergency Department, Laboratory, Admin Section, inquired about the facilities from the patients and their families. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Khurram Shehzad, Principal of Nawaz Sharif Medical College Dr. Zafar Iqbal, Medical Superintendent ABSH Dr. Abid Ghauri gave a briefing on health care facilities.

Educationist Mr. Gilani's sister laid to rest

Elder sister of renowned educationist and owner of multiple educational institutions in the city Mr. Syed Anjum Mahmood Gilani was laid to rest here Tuesday afternoon. The Namaz-e-Janaza was offered in River Garden Town which was attended by a large number of notables from all walks of life. Among the important personalities who attended the funeral prayers were Professor Dr. Iqbal Butt, Mr. Aftab Naqvi, Mr. Arfan Ayyub, Mr. Furqan Ayyub, Mr. Sheraz Anjum, Professor Rashid Butt, Mr. Shaikh Abdul Rasheed, Dr. Naveed Ahmed, Mr. Syed Salman Haider, Mr. Amjad Hussain, Mr. Waqas Butt, Mr. Shajar Nasir and Prof. Hakeem Syed Sabir Ali Shah etc.

Kyrgyz ambassador meets DG ECO of MoFA



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Mr. Ulanbek Totuiaev met with the Director General of the Department of Central Asian Countries and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, Ms. Aqsa Nawaz. During the meeting, the sides discussed topical issues of bilateral relations, including the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Ruslan A. Kazakbaev at the regular Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, holding of the 4th meeting of the

Kyrgyz-Pakistani intergovernmental commission on trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation in this year, as well as the exchange of visits at the highest and high levels.

In order to develop cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic H.E. Mr. Ulanbek Totuiaev proposed to intensify bilateral political contacts, as well as pay special attention to holding events within the framework of the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In turn, the Pakistani side confirmed its readiness to deepen and intensify relations between the two countries, stressing the need to consolidate efforts in promoting the actual issues of bilateral cooperation.

49 shopkeepers fined over profiteering

FAISALABAD: The price control magistrates imposed Rs 107,000 fine on 49 shopkeepers on the charge of profiteering in the district during the past 12 hours. A spokesman for the administration said on Wednesday that the magistrates inspected various shops in different markets and bazaars of Faisalabad and found dozens of shopkeepers involved in profiteering and overcharging. They imposed fine on them and warned that they would be sent behind bars if they did not mend their ways, he added. — APP

Opp. to face miserable defeat against PM

PESHAWAR: Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mush-taq Ghani Wednesday slammed the opposition parties over their alliance and said that those who were criticizing each other in public had formed alliance against Prime Minister Imran Khan. Addressing All Pak Pensioners Association here at District Council Hall, he said that opposition alliance had become "Opposition Family Limited Company" where no party worker could criticize their leadership, adding that Prime Minister Imran Khan was the only person who asserted to hold the opposition leadership accountable for their corrupt practices which was the main reason of current price hike in the country. He said the opposition would face miserable defeat in its attempt to move no confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan. Ghani said that Prime Minister took various pragmatic steps to provide relief to masses especially middle class and poor people from price hike and surge in prices of different commodities due to corona pandemic. He said that corona pandemic affected world economy but still the government of Pakistan initiated various programmes which were aimed to provide relief to the poor people. The Speaker said that the issues of pensioners would also be resolved on priority basis and their children would be given jobs against employees quota. — APP

Zahid Hussain promoted to Grade 21

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain has been promoted to Grade 21 and a notification has been issued by the Punjab Government in this regard. According to the notification he is directed to allow to work at the present place on same posting. Meanwhile, political, social, religious, business, journalistic and other sectors have congratulated the Commissioner on his promotion to Grade 21 and expressed best wishes for him.

Traders meeting held in Kharian

DNA

KHARIAN: The monthly meeting of Central Association of Traders Kharian city held under the patronage of Malik Shabir Awan under the chairmanship of Chaudhry Shaukat Ali at its head office. Recitation of Holy Quran by Kashraf Vice Chairman Chaudhry Zafar Iqbal General Secretary Muhammad Zubair Raza presented the agenda. Special prayers were offered for the deceased of all the members. Chaudhry Shakeel Ahmed Behbali offered condolences to the bereaved families of all the members. It was unanimously decided that the Assistant Commissioner of Administration and DSP Kharian and DSP Traffic Police should immediately improve the situation regarding encroachments and traffic in Kharian city and the problems related to cleanliness in Kharian city. Get them resolved as soon as possible. In the next few days, all these issues will be resolved in collaboration with the management. Finance Secretary Javed Butt presented the annual finance report. Among the participants were President Chaudhry Shaukat Ali, General Secretary Mirza Zubair Raza, Chairman Chaudhry Rashid Mahmood and many others were present.



ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi distributing Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarships to women. — DNA

UAF organizes industrial expo for engineering students

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: University of Agriculture Faisalabad arranged Industrial expo and competition of the students of engineering students in which students brought the innovative ideas that remained the center for attraction for the people. The Expo was inaugurated by UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ah-

mad Khan. He said that in the modern era, only knowledge based economies are proving their mettle in the world and we have to polish innovative ideas to redress the grievances of farming community, general public, and industry. He said that we have talented youth who come up with innovative ideas. He said if we provide them a proper platform, it will help refurbish their skills to play their due role in the

prosperity of the country. He said that engineering had become an integral part of our life as it helped the mankind to open up new window of the development and prosperity.

Dean Faculty of Engineering Dr Muhammad Arshad said that university is used to hold such exhibition in order to provide a platform to the students to exhibit their skills in front of gathering.



PM enjoying confidence of majority parliamentarians

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf legislators on Wednesday said that opposition's no confidence motion will prove fail as Prime Minister Imran Khan is enjoying full confidence of majority in the National Assembly. They said majority parliamentarians have complete trust in the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and policies of the PTT's government which put the country on the path of progress and prosperity. Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, Shehryar Khan Afridi said that opposition's no trust vote against Prime Minister Imran Khan is basically

no trust motion against his policies of reform, revolution. "I take pride in fact that Prime Minister Imran Khan has broken shackles of slavery and I stand by my leader with true hearts". PTI MNA from Karak, Shahid Khattak said that no force can defeat brave leader PM who is determined to change fate of the country despite daunting challenges. "PM Khan is an epitome of truth and has the courage to say absolutely not. You cant stop a leader who is born to thwart corruption", Shahid Khattak said. KP Minister Relief and Rehabilitation, Muhammad Iqbal Wazir said that

nation has elected PM Imran Khan till 2023 and on basis of performance, he will win next election to rule the country till 2028. "Majority of the youth has given their mandate to our beloved leader Imran Khan. Opposition using cheap tactics and malpractices can not succeed". Chairman DDAC Kohat, MPA Ziaullah Bangash said that corrupt and tainted so-called leaders have united against the democratically elected government and their joint move to topple the government is bound to fail as PTT's parliamentarians stands firm behind the dynamic leadership of Imran Khan. — APP

Khuli Kachehris held

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Shehzad Khan Bangash Wednesday said that Khuli Kachehri aimed to facilitate the general public in access to government offices and resolve their problems. He expressed these views while presiding over a district review meeting here. The meeting was attended by all the Administrative Secretaries, Divisional Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of all the districts and other concerned officials. — APP

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CAPITAL HOSPITAL)

TENDER NOTICE

Capital Hospital invites Sealed Bids **single stage Two envelope procedure** for Procurement of different Medicines items for Capital Hospital on F.O.R basis from reputed Firms having experience in the relevant field/registered with Sales Tax Department. Earnest Money 3% of Bid value subject to minimum of Rs.10,000/- in shape of Call Deposit in favour of Drawing & Disbursing Officer (D.D.O), Capital Hospital, CDA must be attached with Financial Proposal/Bid. The detail of Purchase, Tender Cost, and opening dates are mentioned below:-

SINGLE STAGE TWO ENVELOPE PROCEDURE

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	COST OF TENDER	BID SUBMISSION DATE & TIME	BID OPENING DATE & TIME
NO.CDA/CH-2(Medicines)/2021-22/123	Procurement of Medicines (As per List attached)	Rs. 600,000 (M)	Rs.5000/-	30-03-2022 AT 11:00 HRS	30-03-2022 AT 11:30 HRS

02. Tender documents containing complete specifications, terms and conditions can be obtained on payment noted against tender (**non-refundable**) from **Drawing & Disbursing Officer, (D.D.O) Capital Hospital, CDA Sector G-6/2, Islamabad**. The same are also available at CDA website. However, at the time of submission, pay order amounting to tender cost in favour of Drawing & Disbursing Officer, (D.D.O) Capital Hospital, CDA must be attached along-with downloaded tender documents.

03. Sealed Tenders will be received in the office of undersigned on date & time mentioned against each. The envelopes containing "**TECHNICAL PROPOSAL**" will be opened as per schedule mentioned above in the presence of bidder or their representatives who care to attend. The "**FINANCIAL PROPOSAL**" of technically qualified bids will be opened publicly at a time, date and venue announced and communicated to the bidders in advance.

04. Tender without/less earnest money or without relevant documents will not be considered in any case. The successful bidder will deposit security @ 3% of the contract value in the shape of Call Deposit at the time of signing the contract.

05. No tender will be sold on the date of opening of tenders. "**The Authority reserves the right to reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal**".

06. The Bid must have Six months one (1) year (days) validity period.

07. Tender advertisement is available at PPRa Website www.ppra.org.pk & CDA Website www.cda.gov.pk.

(DR. IRSHAD ALI JOKHIO)
Dy. Director Medical-1, Capital Hospital
(CDA), ISLAMABAD,
Tel: 051-9221334 Ext:274

PID (I) No.6310/21

NPO facilitating industrialists to improve productivity: FCCI chief

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: National Productivity Organization (NPO) is rendering best possible facilities to the industrialists to improve the overall productivity of their concerned organization, said Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day training program on "Application of Quality Tools through Innovative Kaizen Circles" in FCCI here today. This program was arranged to achieve the objective of the first productivity movement of Pakistan for sustainable national productivity. The President said that Government policies and commitment of the private sector has played a major role in enhancing overall GDP but the role of international training organizations like NPO could not be ignored. He said that this organization was providing free training facilities to the FCCI



members as we have provided space to the officials of this organization. He appreciated the serious efforts of Mr. Alamgir Chaudhry Chief Executive Officer and Mr. Abdul Qayyum Regional Head NPO for enhancing industrial productivity in this region. He said that 63 executives from the leading industrial units are participating in this session while resource person Dr. Ijaz Yousaf covered different aspects of productivity including understanding true meaning of quality, date and its classification, importance

of statistical process control tools, Kaizen and quality circles, six sigma score etc.

An interactive session was also held in which participants asked different questions.

District govt starts tree plantation

The District government on Wednesday started tree plantation to achieve the target of 20,000 trees. Assistant Commissioner (AC) City Sahibzada Muhammad Yousuf started the plantation drive by

planting a sapling in the lawn of District Council while District Officer Finance Mujeebuz Zaman Shami, District Officer (I&E) Zafar Abbas, DO Regulation Arif Ali Warraich, Superintendent Mian Muhammad Farooq and others were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the AC City said the district government would plant 20,000 trees during recent tree plantation campaign and this target would be achieved during spring season.

National Days and Armed Forces Days**MARCH**

March 01/ Bosnia	National Day
March 03/ Bulgaria	National Day
March 06/ Ghana	Independence Day
March 12/ Mauritius	National Day
March 17/ Ireland	St. Patrick's Day
March 20/ Tunisia	Independence Day
March 21/ Namibia	National Day
March 25/ Greece	National Day
March 26/ Bangladesh	National Day
March 27/ Myanmar	Armed Forces Day

**Hotels & Restaurants**

Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812

**Airlines**

Turkish Airlines.....8494949

**Emergency**

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....1122 & Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.....9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20

**Enquiry**

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Enquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092

**Hospitals**

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International.4603666

**Departments**

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Begum Alvi links progress with women empowerment

Federal Ombudsperson for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplaces Kashmala said it was time to break gender biases in society and realize the challenges faced by women in a male-dominated society

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Begum Samina Alvi, wife of President Arif Alvi on Wednesday said no country could progress without the empowerment of women and stressed that all segments of society needed to play their role in this regard. Speaking at an event held in connection with International Women's Day here at Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Begum Alvi said advocating the rights and emancipation of women was the need of the hour. Begum Alvi said the Pakistani women were showcasing their talent in various fields and professions. She mentioned that women in the country had achieved a successful position after a great struggle. She said women were working alongside men and contributing to the development of the country. Begum Alvi said the government was taking



concrete steps to provide women equal opportunities to excel. She emphasized inculcating the values of respecting women in children right from their homes so as to help develop a civilized society. Federal Ombudsperson

for Protection against Harassment of Women at Workplaces Kashmala Khan said it was time to break gender biases in society and realize the challenges faced by women in a male-dominated society. She emphasized the need for including women in

decision-making and providing them equal job opportunities. She said the government was taking steps for the empowerment of women through effective steps and mentioned that her office was giving verdicts on women's property-related

cases within two months. President RCCI Chaudhry Naem Rauf said Pakistan could only progress with the participation of women in all fields of life, particularly trade and business. He said setting up micro-enterprises, women chambers

and industrial academia linkages were the need of the time. Chairperson Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians Shandana Gulzar, former RCCI president Sohail Altaf and women entrepreneurs attended the event.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic of Yezhan Kistafin in a meeting with Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad, Federal Minister for Interior Affairs. Following the meeting, an agreement was reached on the relevant agreement working draft. - DNA

CDA to ensure security of F-9 Park

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) would make proper security arrangements at F-9 Park to ensure safety of the visitors. The authority would install modern CCTV cameras, besides hiring services of security companies, said its spokesman on Wednesday. He said the guards would be deployed at all entry and exit points in the park, whereas CCTV cameras would be linked with Islamabad Safe City for monitoring. Tenders in that regard would be floated in news papers soon after estimation of cost, he added. Due to special interest of CDA chairman to promote healthy activities in the federal capital, he said repair and maintenance of parks underway across the city. Similarly, orders were issued to re-install broken fences at the park and proper lighting arrangements. The spokesman added that the federal apex agency was considering installation of sign boards at various locations in the park to the convenience of the visitors. Sanitation arrangements were also being improved with installation of trash bins at appropriate places, alongside the walking tracks to provide healthy and clean environment to capital dwellers. Likewise, deliberations underway for more deployment of CDA staff for proper maintenance and look after at the Park. To increase green cover and improve air quality at the park more plants and trees would be planted with special focus on seasonal flowers and fruit trees, he maintained. - DNA

PM Khan's popularity increased: Hammad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar on Wednesday said popularity of Prime Minister Imran Khan has increased manifold in last two weeks. He said in a tweet, now it has become clear to the people that who was standing for the dignity and better future of the country and who was conspiring to protect their plundered wealth. "Not only this assembly, every city and village of Pakistan is proud of its PM," he said.

Bringing TVET reforms for gender mainstreaming

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC) in collaboration with the European Union (EU), German and Norwegian government funded Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector Support Programme organized a seminar on "Breaking the Bias; Harnessing Digitalization in TVET for Women" on the occasion of Internal Women's Day at its head office. The session was also streamed online from the social media accounts of PVTC and TVET Reforms to connect with larger audience and widespread the message. Speaking at the occasion, Chairman PVTC Major Shah Nawaz Badar

initiated the session with opening remarks on the role played by PVTC for promoting technical skills learning among women in Punjab. He added that technical education and vocational training have brought tremendous opportunities for women in Punjab to initiate their own small businesses as well as join the mainstream employment opportunities. Women encouragement in leadership roles, bridging the gap in digital skills, role of women as entrepreneurs, making the workplace safe and harassment free, encouraging more women in digitalized TVET sector remain the key areas of the seminar and webinar. Ms. Sam Ali Dada President WCCI, Lahore graced the occasion as chief guest. She

mentioned that, "implementation of the gender strategies in its true spirits can ensure women socio economic development in Pakistan. Women through her role can play the role of change agent for socio-economic uplift". During the session, Senior Technical Advisor Mr. Qazi Farid highlighted the role of Role of TVET SSP in women empowerment and gender mainstreaming. He added the importance of strategic interventions for engaging more women in the TVET sector for their economic participation. "Women are the 51% population in Pakistan. Their education and skills learning can not only help in supporting their families but a big share to the country's economy", he said.

Girls paint socioeconomic disparity, harassment

Senator Seemi Ezdi was the chief guest on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, she said the paintings were a true reflection of the girls' apprehensions and aspirations. Through art, they have reflected what they feel about the untoward behaviours at homes and in society as well

DNA

RAWALPINDI: More than fifty female participants from different schools and colleges of twin-cities skillfully reflected issues and challenges confronting girls and women in different mediums and pallets. The live painting competition was organized by the Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi in collaboration with Islamabad Crescent Lions Club (ICLC) on Wednesday to mark the International Women's Day. Sexual harassment, inequality,

lack of education, poverty, socio-economic struggle, social disparity, domestic violence, dreams and hope were the subjects the participants painted very intelligently. Some of the art works aesthetically presented flickering vision and thoughts the young women are surrounded by. Kulsoom Chattha and Qindil Shahzad of the Fatima Jinnah Women University won the first prizes, Laiba Imran from Superior College and Tasbiha Rehman from Federal Government Postgraduate Girls College Kashmir Road won the second prizes, Fizza Javed from Islamabad Model College for Girls (Postgrad-



uate) F-7/2 and Muneeba Urooj from International Islamic University Islamabad secured third position, Saharun Nisa of Sultana Foundation Girls High School and Alina Latif of Islamabad Model College

for Girls (Postgraduate) F-7/2 stayed at fourth position, while Laiba Yaseen of Arid Agricultural University and Omaira Khan of Divisional Public School won fifth position. Mahnoor Khushhal of Fatima Jinnah

Women University won the Director's Choice Award. Chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change Senator Seemi Ezdi was the chief guest on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, she said the paintings were a true reflection of the girls' apprehensions and aspirations. Through art, they have reflected what they feel about the untoward behaviours at homes and in society as well. Art is just not a source of expression but a medium to educate people about the social concerns and taboos. Well-known women activist Sumaira Raza urged the parents to give confidence to their daughters

to face the challenges of life and career. We need to prepare our young girls for the future and support their aspirations for the sake of a vibrant society. The exhibits reflect the strength of womanhood that has a key role in a refined society. The first prize winning painting in the Masters category showed an incomplete image of a woman surrounded by the flowers and attractive motifs. Explaining her painting, Humera Tamkeen said women of our society are incomplete despite all luxuries available to her. She is adored for her charms not as a person and her work is also ignored.

Bara Dam's construction to generate 5.8MW electricity

ISLAMABAD: The Bara Dam proposed to alter the existing Bara River for promoting agriculture in the erstwhile tribal region and electricity generation is awaiting the approval of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government. The proposed small, low-head, earth core rockfill, hydroelectric dam possessed the power generation capacity of 5.8 megawatts per annum which was located across Bara River at the confluence of Mastura River in Tirah Valley of newly merged district of Khyber.

The estimated cost of the project was US\$311 million (14.2 billion, out of which \$227 million for civil works and \$28 million for electro-mechanical works were required. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) as the project implementing body wrote letter to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government to consider funds for the project in the fiscal year 2019-2020 so that PC-II of the project was to be resubmitted. A WAPDA official told APP that with the construction of the proposed Bara Dam, flood waters of Bara River would be stored and used for irrigation and power generation purposes. He added that the gross storage of the reservoir was 105 million cubic metres (85,363 acre feet) of which an average of about 110 million cubic metres (89,000 acre ft) of water would be annually available for developing irrigated agriculture of command area of about 17,000 hectares (42,000 acres).

Damming the flow of Bara River, he said would help save the flood water for irrigated agriculture development, power generation and water supply for drinking and other domestic uses. "The project will bring general uplift of the people in the area by creation of employment and business opportunities. These indirect benefits, such as employment opportunities and consequent rise in the living standard of the people, however cannot be quantified in monetary term," he added. - APP

13 more diagnosed with deadly virus

RAWALPINDI: As many as 13 more patients were tested positive for the fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours in the district, with six belonging to the Rawalpindi Cantonment, three from Islamabad and two from Potohar town and Rawal town each. According to the daily situation report issued by the District Corona Management centre on Wednesday, eight confirmed patients were admitted to four health facilities, including four in the Institute of Urology, two in the Fauji Foundation Hospital and one of each in the Bilal and Benazir Bhutto Hospital. The report updated that one patient was stable, seven on double oxygen support, while 158 people were quarantined, including 148 homes and ten isolation centres.

Around 5,624,890 people, including 44,647 health workers, had so far been vaccinated against the fatal disease since the start of the vaccination drive from March 10, 2021," it informed. District Health Authority updated that during the last 24 hours, 1,672 samples were collected, out of which 1,659 were declared negative, while the positivity rate was recorded at 0.77 per cent. - APP

ANF recovers 240 kg drugs

ISLAMABAD: The ANF has conducted a joint operation and recovered large quantities of drugs from two vehicles near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad. According to details, 240kg of drugs were recovered from Toyota Vigo and Suzuki Swift. The drugs seized included 162kg of hashish and 78kg of opium. During the operation, two accused including Naik Mohammad and Salman Khan were arrested. Cases have been registered against them under the Anti-Narcotics Act while further investigation was underway. - APP

Briefs

MCR seals eight illegal shops

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi (MCR), under its operation against illegal construction, on Wednesday sealed eight shops in the Sadiqabad area.

According to details, MCR's Enforcement team carried out an operation against illegal construction and sealed eight shops being constructed without taking approval from the regulation branch. Meanwhile, the MCR teams confiscated two truck-loads from Chandani Chowk, as the food outlets set up at footpaths on Benazir Bhutto road were the source of hurdle in a smooth traffic flow. The Municipal Officer Regulations urged citizens to cooperate with MCR staff else strict action would be taken against those violating the law.

IESCO catch 3,226 suspicious meters

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO's) Operation, M&T and surveillance teams detected 3,226 suspicious electricity meters in all six circles of the company during February. The IESCO spokesman told that the IESCO's teams inspected a total of 56,215 electricity meters in all the circles during the said period. As many as 1,526,972 units were charged to the consumers on account of power pilferage besides imposing fine of Rs 28,529,576 to them, he said.

He said FIRs have also been filed against 53 persons in the concerned police stations for legal action against them. Meanwhile, IESCO Chief Dr Muhammad Amjad Khan said power theft caused irreparable loss to the company and the country. A comprehensive power pilferage drive was being carried out across all the six circles of the company with out any discrimination, he added. - APP

HEC announces last date for PHD scholarships

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced 31st March, 2022 as deadline to apply for PHD Scholarships Programme in United States of America (USA) for Fall 2022 and Spring/Summer 2023.

According to HEC, the scholarships have been announced under US-Pakistan Knowledge Corridor, a project of Higher Education Commission, Pakistan. HEC has invited applications for scholarships in PhD Programme in designated US Universities.

According to details, the scholarship is only for PhD Programme and does not include MS Leading to PhD. HEC asked the candidates to submit their applications for scholarships online via HEC scholarship portal (<http://scholarship.hec.gov.pk>), not later than 28 February, 2022. - APP

'Female quota increases under Ehsaas'

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection DrSaniaNishtar Wednesday said that the government under umbrella of Ehsaas programme initially, has allocated 50% quota for the female but after three years of its implementation, the quota was increased to almost 98%. Empowerment of women was beneficial for society and present government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was determined to lift poorest women out of poverty and help them achieve their potential, she said while speaking to Radio Pakistan's current affair programme. In Ehsaas programme, the girls are getting more stipend amount as compared to the boys, she said, adding, moreover, as per the policy, the girls are getting 50% of total scholarships provided by the government. - APP

No confidence motion to face defeat: Shahbaz Gill

"Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf will not turn away from its manifesto of accountability as the corrupt elements of the country will not be spared at any cost. Prime Minister has raised the image of Pakistan at the international level," he said in a presser here

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Political Communication Dr. Shahbaz Gill on Wednesday said the no confidence motion moved by the opposition against Prime Minister Imran Khan would face nothing but defeat. "Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf will not turn away from its manifesto of accountability as the corrupt elements of the country will not be spared at any cost. Prime Minister has raised the image of Pakistan at the international level," he said in a presser here. Referring to the opposition's press conference, said the three (Shahbaz Sharif, Asif Ali Zardari and FazalurRehman) who were sitting at the

press conference were the ones who in past couldn't tolerate each other.

He said there were global powers that do want to see Pakistan stable. "On June 21, Imran Khan refused to give up his military bases. Why should someone pay the price of others statements. Countries are strong when they make strong statements. Some neighboring countries lie down in front of the strong and grab the collar of the weak," he said. Gill said we should teach our children to speak in front of such a country. "Imran Khan was asked that would he not join anyone's war by becoming the Prime Minister. "If a country will ask to use your airport to attack another, will you give it? If there had been a coward, he would have said we



will talk and tell you. But Khan is only person who cares for Pakistan. Discarding the rumors, he said there were many fake rumors spread against the government, "The first rumor was that the government would be overthrown in September. Then it was said that Imran Khan had angered the European ambassador. We know very well where it all started," he said Gill said Khan speaks of friendship and was an ambassador of peace who doesn't believe in warfare. "Khan also asked to sit and talk on Ukraine and Afghan issue. Khan was the one to speak in the European Union," he said. He said this was the first time that 'Absolutely Not' was said instead of pleasing any country. "Khan said countries should respect

our borders and we will respect theirs. The successful foreign policy is in front of everyone. When troops withdrew from Afghanistan, we did not support anyone. Khan has always stood up for humanity." Gill said if Khan wanted to do horse trading, then who can do better than him, as there was plentiful of cash in the treasury. But Khan has never done it and won't ever do," he said. To a question, he said Khan allocate billions of rupees in Ehsaas programs every year. "He has reduced inflation, reduced petrol prices, introduced health cards and many more schemes to help and safeguard the poor," he said. Gill said the steps taken by the government to tackle COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have been recognized worldwide.

Govt taking steps to for overseas Pakistanis

ISLAMABAD: The incumbent government was taking various steps to provide maximum facilities to expatriates and their dependents in the country. An official source told APP here on Wednesday that a series of projects and schemes have been launched for the welfare and development of the Overseas Pakistanis in different sectors including health, education and social welfare by the current government. The number of projects launched for expatriates including Sohni Dharti, schemes of Modern Luxury Apartments, Roshan Digital Account, Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit, Call Sarzameen, Naya Pakistan Calling Project, Visit Pakistan, internship, Complaint Cell, Ambulance Service, Investment Facilities Centre, Reintegration of Returnee Migrant Workers and Foreign Exchange Remittance Card. He added that the government has directed to all provincial governments to upgrade all facilities at provincial airports to facilitate the Overseas Pakistanis. - APP

Pakistan Post launches EMO services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post, Electronic Money Order (EMO) service has been launched at all General Post Offices (GPOs) nationwide and has been successfully rolled out at the Digital Franchise Post Offices (DFPO). Pakistan Post has introduced the Digital Franchise Post Office (DFPO) Programme that enables aspiring entrepreneurs to set up and operate a safe, profitable and respectable business of their own. According to Pakistan Post, Digital Franchise Offices were equipped with latest technology and offer a variety of products and services, adding that this also ensure an effective track and trace facility on all articles booked from DFPOs and customers enjoy peace of mind by having complete visibility of their articles at each step throughout the articles journey. In line with vision to make it a profitable venture for franchisees, Pakistan Post have extended the portfolio of products and services offered through the DFPO locations. - APP

IRSA releases 70644 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: River System Authority (IRSA) Wednesday released 70644 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 78883 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1085.50 feet, which was 33.05 feet higher than its dead level of 1050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded 39718 and 31979 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 19477, 19920 and 28810 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River, a total of 4900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 14865 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP

Twenty four professional beggars held

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police, in its crackdowns on professional beggars, arrested 24 beggars to discourage the menace of begging and avoid risk of road accidents due to jay-walking of tramps. On the directives of the in-charge Beggars Squad, along with their respective teams, took action against the professional beggars, and detained them in different police stations of Rawalpindi city, said the Rawalpindi Police spokesperson. On this occasion, SSP Operations WaseemRiaz said the special beggar squad was working hard to overcome the increasing number of professional beggars. "The professional beggars stand on various highways and squares of Rawalpindi city and not only affect the flow of traffic but also increase risk of accidents. Therefore, the public is also requested that do not serve alms to them as discouraging such factors will not only improve the society but also the flow of traffic," he said. - APP

COMSTech offers host of programmes to Nigeria

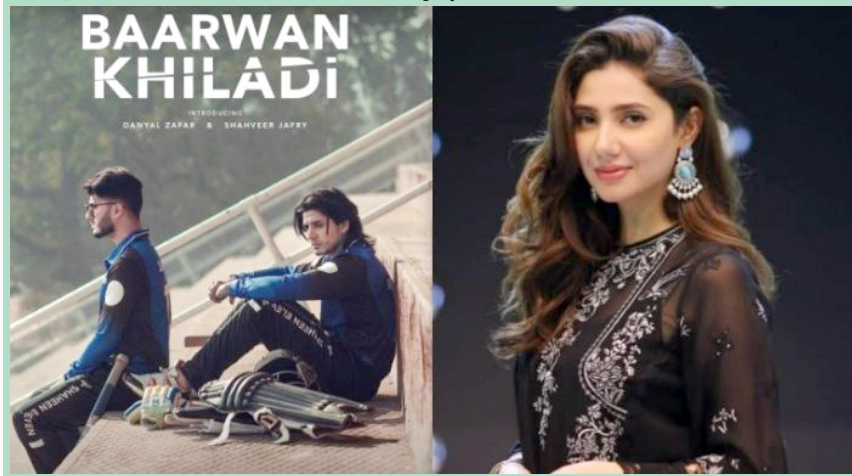
ISLAMABAD: Coordinator General COMSTech, H. E. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary called on the High Commissioner of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Bello Abioye on Tuesday at the Nigerian High Commission in Islamabad. The High Commissioner of Nigeria extended a warm welcome to the Coordinator General COMSTech. Both the dignitaries discussed avenues of mutual cooperation for the enhancement and application of science and technology to achieve optimum socio-economic development in Nigeria. Prof. Choudhary invited top universities of Nigeria to join the COMSTech Consortium of Excellence (CCoE) which comprises upon key science, technology and engineering research and academic institutions of the OIC states. The objective of CCoE is to create science and technology interdependence, build S&T capacity and foster collaboration among the OIC member states. Both the dignitaries agreed to launch the COMSTech-Nigeria science and technology cooperation initiative jointly with the coordination of the ministry of foreign affairs. This flagship joint initiative includes launching of women scientist research fellowship program, creating institutional linkages between Nigeria and Pakistan, capacity building of Nigerian scholars, compilation of a book comprising of joint research publications and patents of Pakistani and Nigerian scientists, and industrial internship for Nigerian professionals in food processing and value addition. - APP



ISLAMABAD: General Manager Islamabad Serena Hotel Michel A Galopin in a group photo with the female staff members on the occasion of International Women Day. - DNA

Mahira 'Baarwan Khiladi' got netizens in awe

ISLAMABAD: The sports-based web series 'Baarwan Khiladi' (Twelfth Player) got amazing response from social media after the release of its first two episodes. The most awaited Mahira Khan's project took over the Pakistani social media by storm. Many viewers took to their social media accounts and applauded the brilliant start of an amazing cricket-based drama. "MashaAllah, Congratulations Producer Sahiba. So proud of you. Just finished watching Baarwan khiladi & I actually loved it. Just like you, I'm really bad when it comes to sports, but I really, really enjoyed it", a twitter user Fareed voiced his appreciation. "I have watched the first episode of baarwan khiladi and it was fantastic and I have to say you're the flag bearer of good content & change. You did this Mk and I'm so proud of you", another user SadiaJeelani praised the actor-turned producer Mahira Khan for her efforts to bring a unique story on-screen. Many viewers praised the web series for the performances of veteran actors like Sarmad Khoosat and Fawad Khan, as well as emerging talent such as Daniyal Zafar and Shahveer Jafry. "Sarmad Khoosat & Shahveer Jafry have done exceptionally well", shared Meer Basit, a twitter user. While on the other hand some of the viewers didn't look much impressed with the story-line and expressed their sentiments over the social networking website. "Watched the first episode and I strongly loved Sarmad's performance. He is so good and apart from that I liked some scenes of Daniyal and his scenes with Saba Jee&Kinza too. Sadly, it sort of failed to attract me towards it, but I will try", Faizan wrote sharing his mixed response over twitter. According to the official description of web-series over Tapmad, Baarwan Khiladi is a story about a small-town boy, Akbar, who loves cricket and has a dream to play on a national level all his life. - DNA



World's silence over Indian crimes against women in IIOJK alarming: Mushaal

ISLAMABAD: The Chairperson of Peace and Culture Organisation, Mushaal Hussein Mullick lamented that Indian troops have been committing shocking crimes against Kashmiri women of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) for the last three decades but ironically the world powers observed criminal silence in this regard. Mushaal, who is the wife of the detained JKLF Chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik said that the Kashmiri women who are facing the worst trauma inflicted by the Indian troops in IIOJK, said a press release here on Wednesday. She added that rape is used as a weapon of war in the occupied valley. She said that across the globe women of the world fighting for equality, peace, and progress.

The chairperson stated that world must not forget the trauma Kashmiri widows and half-widows. Referring to Kunanposhpora, she said how women were raped by the troops but so far no one has been punished for the worst crime rather the Indian authorities protected the criminals. Mushaal said that women across IIOJK continue to face victimization at the hands of Indian troops, as Indian troops have raped 11,250 women since Jan 1989 till date in IIOJK. The chairperson went on to say that Indian state terrorism has rendered 22,942 women widowed in the last 32 years adding that India is using rape and molestation of women as a weapon of war in IIOJK.

"Kashmiri women are being mentally tortured through frequent raids and enforced disappearances of their loved ones, besides subjecting routinely Kashmiri women to



sexual harassment," she added. The Hurriyat leader stated that a large number of widows, half-widows in IIOJK was the testimony to Indian troops' savagery, as India is the world's leading country as far as rape and other crimes against women are concerned. She urged human rights organizations to expose the Indian army's crimes against Kashmiri women so as to build pressure on the world powers to act against the fascist Narendra Modi-led government. The Chairperson said that besides sexual violence, the Kashmiri women had been suffering psychological and physical horrors at the hands of brutal Indian troops. She said that there are thousands of women who have no information about the whereabouts of their husbands subjected to enforced disappearance by Indian troops since 1989. - APP

OIC committed to address contemporary challenges

Ambassador Sheikh said that 70 to 80 per cent of the active conflicts in the world right now involved Muslim populations at the risk of being affected, which automatically entailed that the role and function of the OIC was important, now, more than ever

DNA

ISLAMABAD, March 9, 2022: The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) had thus far contributed extensively in conflict mitigation, beyond the scope of its auspices that was presumably limited to the Muslim world and before according any expectations with the Organisation, it was important to bear in mind that the OIC, unlike the United Nations did not possess the mandate to contemplate, suggest or initiate kinetic actions, said Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to OIC. He was addressing a webinar titled 'OIC and Prospects of Joint Islamic Action in Contemporary World' organised by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) Islamabad here on Wednesday. Ambassador Sheikh said that 70 to 80 per cent of the active conflicts

in the world right now involved Muslim populations at the risk of being affected, which automatically entailed that the role and functional of the OIC was important, now, more than ever.

The organisation's work, particularly with reference to Kashmir and Palestine issue had gained impetus over the last few years. He added that considering the genesis of both the issues, the differences amongst the two had become immaterial and that both Palestine and Kashmir had striking resemblances in terms of manner of occupation, exertion of power by the occupants and illegal settlements in respective disputed territories. Speaking on the challenges to the OIC, Ambassador Sheikh iterated that while the OIC was indispensably amenable to Pakistan's stand on Kashmir issue, especially after the August 5th adventurism by the Indian forces, the resolution of the

issue was fundamentally reliant on the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, leaving the OIC with only extending political and diplomatic support for the cause. In similitude, he added, the fact that Palestine issue was treated as an 'Arab' issue, inadvertently resulted in Arab League taking charge of the issue, which had basically limited the scope of the conflict, minimising the chances of its resolution. Had the Palestine issue been entirely taken up by the OIC, it would have gathered larger projection and audience, enabling swift discussions regarding its resolution.

The OIC was committed in its resolve to voice up against the contemporary challenges affecting Muslims across the globe and not just in the member countries and as it was an organisation that took birth in the aftermath of a major conflict itself, i.e., the

Arab-Israel war, the organisation stood positive in tackling the challenges in its way.

Dr Usman Chohan, Director Economic Affairs and National Development at CASS, Islamabad while discussing the economic component of the OIC and how Pakistan could play its role in maximising the economic potential for itself and other countries in the Muslim brotherhood emphasised the role of Islamic Development Bank (IDB). He said that the IDB had a pristine international rating and that while the performance of the multilateral institution thus far was commendable, it had the potential of doing more for OIC member countries. A conservative operational framework, he added, would have been justifiable had the countries in the Islamic world been mostly developed which was not the case

in reality. On the contrary, in fact, he said, that the gap between economic potential and actual economic growth in most of these countries was widening and that the IDB needed to realign its priorities in consonance with the economic reality of all member countries and not just economically sound countries such as Saudi Arabia.

He added, that Pakistan could prove extremely beneficial in this realignment considering the mutuality in the interest areas of the IDB and government of Pakistan, which included but were not limited to social development, pollution, renewable energy creation, sustainable energy creation, affordable housing and improved transportation systems. A more proactive perusal on the aforementioned goals along with an effective engagement strategy by the IDB was the need of the hour, he said.

No trust move against PM Imran Khan

THE opposition parties have finally submitted a no-confidence motion against the Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Speaker of the National Assembly will now call the session and announce as to when the voting shall take place. According to rules, the process should be completed within the next three or four weeks. Even the prime minister was not expecting that the opposition will submit the motion keeping in view the past practices and Opposition's dilly dallying tactics. However the cat has finally come out of the bag and now the question for the government is as to how to send the cat back into the bag. The PPP long march culminated at the D Chowk with speeches of the key leaders including the Chairman Bilawal Bhutto and Co-Chairman Asif Ali Zardari. Unexpectedly, the PPP did not stage a sit-in as was expected. Political analysts believed the PPP was coming to Islamabad for a dharna till the time the no trust move yielded some results. But it did not happen. Analysts believe, dharna was not part of the script therefore the PPP men dispersed peacefully. The body language of the prime minister appears to have changed after the submission of the no-trust move. He is now reaching out to his allies in order to muster support against the move. Similarly, he is trying to woo the disgruntled party voices, who apparently have decided to pool their support in favour of the opposition camp. Legally the PTI MPs cannot vote against the prime minister. What they can do is that they form a forward bloc in the National or Provincial Assembly and ask the Speaker to allot them space on the opposition benches. The Jahangir Tareen and Aleem Khan factors are likely to play a key role in the future course of action. In Punjab they have decided to get Usman Buzdar out of power come what may. And in the Center they may support the opposition camp in case the prime minister and his team fail to woo them back into their camp. To some the chances of a no-trust move to succeed, at this particular stage, are 50-50 but if the PTI's splinter group remains steadfast in its opposition to the leadership the chances may be 60-40 in favour of the opposition. The Information Minister has claimed that they have the support of 184 members. If the prime minister is able to survive this move then ostensibly he will emerge as a strong man.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 259

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China and Russia

UKRAINE'S foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, has said that "China is interested in stopping this war". On Tuesday, Xi Jinping made statement on the war as the French president and German chancellor met him virtually, calling for "maximum restraint" and saying that China was "pained to see the flames of war reignited in Europe". But he did not call it an invasion or blame Russia. The bilateral relationship is at its closest for seven decades, since the Sino-Soviet split. Weeks before the invasion, the two presidents declared that it had "no limits" as Vladimir Putin visited Beijing for the Winter Olympics – the only major leader to do so amid a western diplomatic boycott. China has denounced reports that it asked Russia not to invade during the Games as US disinformation. Even if Mr Xi knew that his counterpart planned a full-scale invasion across Ukraine, he surely failed to anticipate the strength of resistance and the scale of the international backlash. But his personal investment in the partnership makes it extremely hard to correct course. European attempts to position China as a mediator reflect the lack of other options, but also the understanding that it is attempting to reconcile three irreconcilable elements: its closeness to Russia; its long-declared belief in territorial integrity, national sovereignty and non-interference; and its need to minimise the fallout it experiences from the sanctions on Moscow. This, rather than fundamental shifts in its position, explains confused messaging since 24 February, and China's decision to abstain rather than vote with Russia on key UN resolutions. Mr Xi no doubt appreciates that Mr Putin has dragged the Biden administration's attention away from dealing with China. The new closeness between the US and Europe – including central and eastern European countries that China has been carefully courting – is less welcome. Sino-Russian trade has grown substantially; last year it jumped to a record \$146.9bn (£111.9bn). But that is only around half the level of China's trade with the EU, and a fraction of its trade with the US. It trails strategic objectives.

Some lives are more valuable than others

Andrew Mitrovica

The necessary corollary to this is that when nations populated by white Europeans are invaded by Western powers, stories about tragedy, sacrifice, heroism and the horrors of war abound

THERE can no longer be any doubt about this egregious fact: too many Western journalists sent to Ukraine to report on another disfiguring war believe that some lives are more valuable than others. Their transparently racist coverage of Vladimir Putin's ruthless invasion confirms that they deem the suffering and deaths of white Christians more distressing and worthier of the world's focus and empathy than the suffering and deaths of war-ravaged Ethiopians, Somalis, Sudanese, Yemenis, Syrians, Afghans, Libyans, Iraqis, and, of course, Palestinians. If the proprietors or editors of "major" Western TV networks and newspapers object to this indictment, then I challenge them to step up and contest the, by now ample and convincing, evidence. I will wait. These proprietors, editors, and a gaggle of agitated readers may say: "Ah, but Al Jazeera is guilty on this score, as well." It is true – an Al Jazeera host recently said some stupid things about what sets European casualties of war apart from Arab and North African casualties of war which rightly offended. Al Jazeera quickly acknowledged the faux pas and issued a blunt and apologetic statement disavowing the host's "irresponsible" remarks. But this one instance of insensitivity cannot diminish or negate the entrenched attitude that infects much – not all – of Western media: some lives are indeed more valuable than others. I arrived at this callous conclusion not only as an observer of the appalling biases of

Western media, but as a press card-carrying member of the same. Throughout my career, I have worked at several "major" Western news organisations, including Canada's so-called "national" newspaper of record, The Globe and Mail, and the country's public broadcaster, the CBC.

At each of these waystations along the instructive way, I saw how a stubbornly monochromatic editorial staff shaped institution-wide editorial policies that, in effect, established who and what kind of "victims" warrant sympathy and attention and who and what kind of "victims" do not. The necessary corollary to this is that when nations populated by white Europeans are invaded by Western powers, stories about tragedy, sacrifice, heroism and the horrors of war abound. But when Muslim nations were invaded by Western powers, reporters went along for the giddy ride as "embedded" stenographers who trumpeted – with varying degrees of triumphalism and awe – the speed, agility and "firepower" of the occupying armies as they hurtled towards quagmire, defeat and retreat and hurting Iraqis and Afghans be damned. Clearly, despite promising change, these shameful practices are as pervasive today as they were yesterday. I have written about this disgraceful double standard in column after column long before it became apparent that besieged blond-haired, blue-eyed Ukrainians murdered by Russian thugs in uniforms were made martyrs by Western media, while besieged brown-eyed, olive-skinned Palestinians murdered by Israeli thugs in uniforms are regarded as cheap and disposable by the same Western media. This is the overarching truth that has been on glaring display since Putin's invasion of Ukraine began: the lives of white Europeans engulfed by war matter and the lives of everyone else outside that continent engulfed by war do not. Even more contemptible is the common refrain among much of the Western media that when countless Arabs, Africans or South Asians are killed in war, their deaths are the acceptable byproduct of the West's honourable designs to "liberate" them from the talons of one diabolical autocrat or another. In a refreshing bout of honesty, an NBC reporter ditched the palatable code phrases and admitted outright to viewers that Europeans were not like Syrians in all the

ways that count in times of war.

"To put it bluntly, these are not refugees from Syria," she said. "These are refugees from neighbouring Ukraine. I mean, that is, quite frankly, part of it. These are Christians. They're White. They are very similar to people in Poland."

I appreciate her frankness and bluntness given that it strips away the last veneer of deceit that all casualties of war are considered equal. Still, the prize for the most candid expression of white, European exceptionalism goes to a CBS correspondent who had this to say about what distinguishes Muslims from Christians at war. "This isn't a place, with all due respect, like Iraq or Afghanistan, that has seen conflict raging for decades," the prize winner said. "You know, this is a relatively civilised, relatively European – I have to choose those words carefully, too – city where you wouldn't expect that or hope that it's going to happen." Remember, he chose his words "carefully" before telling a like-minded American audience that Ukrainians are "civilised" and, by extension, Iraqis and Afghans are uncivilised. Astonishing.

It is also astonishing to see Western media and foreign ministers catch the same express bus to the International Criminal Court at The Hague to demand that the bad guys be charged with war crimes while the good guys in Tel Aviv and beyond will always escape a similar fate and judgement.

Finally, I am old enough to remember when well-manicured Western cable news hosts set aside their ideological differences to join in what amounted to a near-reverential celebration of "shock and awe" in Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan by the good guys pursuing "regime change". These days, the cable news hosts have traded their trademark cheerleading for indignation and condemnation of the bad guys' pursuit of "regime change" by way of a "barbaric" campaign of "shock and awe" against cowering innocents in Kyiv and Kharkiv. You see, according to the Western press, the good guys do liberations and the bad guys do war crimes. Helpful note to editors and reporters in Atlanta, Washington, DC, New York and London: Human suffering is human suffering – wherever and whenever it occurs.

—Courtesy: Al Jazeera

What will it take Pakistan to pursue its geo-economic ambitions?

Durdana Najam

Pakistan would have to adopt a policy of non-interference in neighboring countries' internal matters, and boost intraregional trade and connectivity. In this regard, Pakistan should first secure its economic interest before meddling into non-consequential regional conflicts. Of course, Kashmir is necessary; however, restoring trade ties with India is equally important to open new avenues for bilateral engagement. Recently, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Dawood Razak suggested restoring trade ties with India to improve Pakistan's dismally low trade figures

money we receive. Moreover, the reliance on debt comes with a cost. Many foreign policies that Pakistan pursued, especially our involvement in wars since 1977 were a premium we paid to keep the tap of money running.

In pursuance of its pivot to geo-economics, Pakistan has decided to remain neutral in the international arena currently bedeviled with war. In his interview with Russian TV before going to Russia on his maiden visit, PM Khan said that Pakistan would not side with any bloc. Also, when Bajwa says, "Seeing Pakistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor prism is misleading," he indicates that Pakistan is following an independent foreign and economic policy. However the question is: Is staying diplomatically neutral enough for achieving the geo-economic pivot? What would it truly take for Pakistan to pursue its geo-economic ambitions?

At first, Pakistan would need stable political and economic conditions. Political uncertainty like the one we have today where the government is sent packing every hour is detrimental to an economy that has already become a sore spot for investors due to frequent policy shifts. Case in point: the present government has changed four finance ministers in three years.

Next, there should be a limit to how much the judiciary can interfere in administrative and political issues and how far it is willing to put its house in order. The judiciary and judicial processes affect the economic governance of a country in five ways: One by establishing the rule of law; two by ensuring an efficient process of accountability; three by enforcing and protecting contracts; four by providing security of person and property; five by giving equal access justice to the poor and less privileged in society. According to Babar Sattar, Justice Islamabad High Court: "The history of the rule of law in Pakistan is a discreditable one of using the law and its processes to strike deals between competing power elites, as opposed to defining the boundaries of right and wrong and holding the guilty to account. That is why many see the law as a tool for the powerful to settle scores, and not as an instrument of justice...our system of checks and balances is neither potent nor functional. Our power elites do not like public officials exhibiting autonomy and independence."

Finally, Pakistan would have to adopt a policy of non-interference in neighboring countries' internal matters, and boost intraregional trade and connectivity. In this regard, Pakistan should first secure its economic interest before meddling into non-consequential regional conflicts. Of course, Kashmir is necessary; however, restoring trade ties with India is equally important to open new avenues for bilateral engagement. Recently, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Commerce and Investment Dawood Razak suggested restoring trade ties with India to improve Pakistan's dismally low trade figures.

—Courtesy: Arab News

Ode to strong women on International Women's Day 2022

Zahra Ali Khan



You have endured unspeakable ache and despite your struggles, you outdo every hindrance

AN ode to all the empowered women out there who are constantly fighting for their beliefs, holding their heads high & shoulders strong, making anything possible with or without a man or woman. You rise with strength and power that radiates off of you with brilliance. Each foot you place on the ground is with purpose and intention. With every spin and every jump

you feel invincible. I know it has not been a smooth journey to get to where you are today. And some days, it still feels like an uphill battle. But here is the thing: you've come so far, and until today, you continue to move forward rather than back, even if taking that next step forward requires you to wear out all that strength from within. Every time you fall, you choose to pick yourself up immediately rather than feel sorry for yourself, because sometimes being strong is the only choice you have, especially when you wish to make progress and grow. You have endured unspeakable ache and despite your struggles, you outdo every hindrance. Sometimes being strong is the only choice you have, and the world thanks you for making this choice. Because you're strong, the world is changing for the better. There is nothing you can't do. You radiate with light and you influence every person you meet. You are unwavering in your beliefs and you are mature enough to respect others' opinions. Loud or soft, your voice is a sound wave that never fluctuates. People are drawn to you with a force stronger than gravity. You are loved, feared, liked, and even hated, but your head remains high and your shoulders strong. People would love to see you fall.

You ignore these people and focus on the ones who are there for you when you hold the power of the world within your clutch. Most importantly, you are okay with yourself. Being alone does not mean you're lonely. You indulge in time that you have to be with yourself. You do not need a man or woman by your side to feel complete. You love who you are. You own it. Finding a significant other who respects your power and is not threatened by your strength is rare, and that's okay with you. You know that whether or not you find this person you will be fine because you have your strength to fall back on. Never feel ashamed of the power and strength that you embody. Strut down every sidewalk and smile at every person who glares towards your direction. You are more than the judgments society creates about you. You are not afraid to speak your mind. You are brilliant and unstoppable. Keep your erotic candor, head high and shoulders strong – most importantly, always be true to yourself and never stop being your bold, brilliant, beautiful self. The world is yours.

—The writer is a Human Rights Activist, Community Service Volunteer, Regular contributor towards SDGs, & present an M.phil Scholar.

Briefs

PM pays visit to National Stadium Karachi

KARACHI: Prime Minister Imran Khan paid a visit to the National Stadium Karachi via an Army Helicopter ahead of the second Test match of the Pakistan-Australia Test series. Khan paid a visit to the stadium to check up on the arrangements for the second Test match of the historic series. The premier left after taking a short briefing from the stadium's management. The first Test match, played at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, ended as a draw after the hosts' openers put up a brilliant second-innings partnership on the final day to end the match as a draw. — APP

PM meets MQM-P...

FROM PAGE 01
Planning Minister Asad Umar, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Maritime Affairs Minister Ali Zaidi. The Prime Minister's Office said the premier discussed the current political situation with the MQM-P leaders, who in turn assured him of full support. FM Qureshi said the meeting was fruitful and the two parties had finalised a workable strategy for the future, according to a statement carried by Radio Pakistan. He said the MQM-P leadership expressed their full confidence in the premier and the PTI thanked its ally for its hospitality and support. After his meeting with MQM-P leaders, the premier arrived at Sindh Governor House, where he held a meeting with GDA leaders and discussed the overall political situation in the country. Our options are open, says MQM-P leader. Soon after a brief meeting with PM Imran, MQM-P leader Amir Khan told media that no discussion took place on the no-confidence motion with the prime minister. "It was a good gesture from the prime minister, who came to our office after a gap of three and a half years," he told journalists. He insisted that his party did not complain to the prime minister about "anything". Responding to a question on whether the MQM-P was supporting the no-trust move, Khan said his party was an ally of the government "but our options are open".

Fawad wants NA session...

FROM PAGE 01
conference alongside Energy Minister Hammad Azhar in Islamabad. He said the government would not hold any talks with the opposition, adding that "we tried to talk to them on electoral reforms and other matters of public interest but they did not respond to us". Chaudhry said the fading popularity of the PPP and the PML-N, the two main opposition parties, due to their corruption would result in their downfall. He criticised PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif for saying that one of the reasons behind the no-trust move was the premier's recent criticism of the European Union in Mailsi. "Is the EU your relative?" Chaudhry questioned as he explained that relationships between countries are based on national interests and Pakistan's interests would have to be considered above the EU's or any others.

Shehbaz says in contact...

FROM PAGE 01
in centre and Punjab is holding meetings with the different political leadership and on Wednesday, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain reached Zardari House in Islamabad to meet former president Asif Ali Zardari, amid rapidly changing political scenario. The current political situation and the issue of the no-confidence motion, tabled by the opposition in the National Assembly, were discussed in the meeting, according to sources.

AHC-PCB empowering girls through cricket

Australia's Chargé d'Affaires, Bryce Hutchesson congratulated the girls and the schools on their participation and welcomed the continued support of the PCB and Serena Hotels for the annual AHC-PCB Girls' Cricket Cup

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Australian High Commission (AHC) and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) with the support of Serena Hotels today hosted the 6th AHC-PCB Girls' Cricket Cup at F-9 Cricket Ground, Islamabad.

Australia's Chargé d'Affaires, Bryce Hutchesson congratulated the girls and the schools on their participation and welcomed the continued support of the PCB and Serena Hotels for the annual AHC-PCB Girls' Cricket Cup.

"The Australian High Commission has been sponsoring girls' cricket in Pakistan since 2016 to promote gender equality through sport. We began with a single annual tournament in Islamabad but have since expanded to Lahore and Karachi," Mr Hutchesson said. "Our countries share a passion for cricket, so we're very pleased to support this event. Cricket and other sports can help tear down barriers and stereotypes. Every time these girls make some runs, take a wicket or hold a catch, they are taking a step towards greater equality," he said. The girls attended a five-day coaching clinic in the lead-up to the competition conducted by PCB first class cricket coaches. Mr Hutchesson added the High Commission was particularly happy to support the initiative during the Australian Cricket Team's historic tour to Pakistan. "It's an exciting time for cricket fans in both Australia and Pakistan. Cricket is one of the many bonds that bring our countries together," he said. The Head of Women Cricket at Pakistan Crick-



et Board, Tania Mallick said, "On the auspicious occasion of the International Women's Day yesterday, with the Australian Cricket men's team playing in Pakistan after decades - it is a privilege to collaborate with the Australian High Commission to organise this cricket event for underprivileged girls." "The Australian High Commission with the support of PCB have always played a vital role in promoting women cricket and investing in the empowerment of women in Pakistan. Such events can play an

important role in the development and promotion of women cricket. We look forward to further strengthening our relationship," she added.

Mr Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels, said, "Cricket is a passion in Pakistan. Under Serena Hotels Sports Diplomacy initiatives, we support, facilitate, and sponsor numerous sporting events and our commitments to sports diplomacy and women's empowerment have found expression in the AHC-PCB Girls' Cricket Cup. This tournament

provides a wonderful vehicle for promoting and highlighting the importance of gender equality in sport."

The AHC-PCB Girls' Cup Islamabad involved teams from four schools: Mashal Model School Bari Imam, SOS Children's Village H-11, Islamabad Model School for Girls - F-6/1 and Islamabad Model School for Girls I-9/1 Islamabad.

This year's competition was also supported by Malik Sports through the donation of cricket equipment.

Vogue erases 'Palestine' following 'Zionist' backlash



WEB DESK

NEW YORK: American monthly fashion and lifestyle magazine, Vogue, has conveniently erased "Palestine" from an Instagram post shared lately by supermodel Gigi Hadid. The American model from Dutch-Palestinian descent announced this week that she will be donating her fashion month earnings towards relief

efforts in Ukraine and Palestine.

Taking to Instagram, Hadid wrote, "I am pledging to donate my earnings from the fall 2022 shows to aid those suffering from the war in Ukraine, as well as continuing to support those experiencing the same in Palestine."

On Monday, Vogue covered Hadid's announcement in an article. Vogue titled the article as "Gigi Hadid Is Donating Her Fashion Month Earn-

ings to Ukrainian Relief," quoting her caption almost in full. Vogue promoted the article on its official Instagram with a post whose caption originally started as follows: "Today, @Gigihadid announced that she will be donating all of her fashion month earnings towards relief efforts in Ukraine, "as well as continuing to support those experiencing the same in Palestine." A day after Vogue posted the photo, it edited its caption to omit the quote from Hadid's original statement mentioning Palestine.

Beyond Instagram, Vogue also edited its actual story to remove one of the two original instances of Palestine being mentioned, specifically a quote of the final line of Hadid's post.

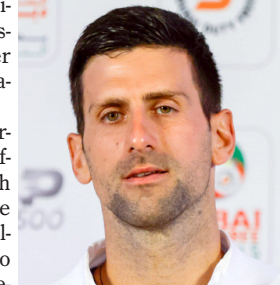
The line read, "HANDS OFF UKRAINE. HANDS OFF PALESTINE. PEACE." Vogue has not released a statement on exactly why it edited the caption. However, before Vogue edited the caption, the pro-Israel lobby flooded the post with comments accusing Vogue of "fanning the flames of anti-Semitism." Jewish actress Emmanuelle Chriqui commented on the post, writing, "I can't believe @voguemagazine is supporting this false and dangerous narrative... well done @voguemagazine [for] fanning the flames of antisemitism."

Novak Djokovic entered on Indian Wells draw

NEWS DESK

INDIAN WELLS: Novak Djokovic was entered into the draw for this week's ATP/WTA Indian Wells tournament on Tuesday but it is unclear whether he will take part in the tournament, organisers said.

A brief statement from tournament organisers said officials were in contact with Djokovic's team to determine whether he would play in California or even be allowed to enter the United States because he has not been vaccinated against the coronavirus. "Novak Djokovic is on the tournament entry list, and therefore is placed into the draw today," tournament chiefs said. "We are currently in communication with his team; however, it has not been determined if he will participate in the event by getting CDC approval to enter the country." Djokovic is a five-time champion at Indian Wells, where organisers have said proof of full vaccination will be required for spectator entry into the grounds for the tournament in the California desert. Under US government regulations, all non-US citizen travellers entering the United States must be vaccinated against Covid-19. Djokovic was barred from the Australian Open in January after officials said he did not meet requirements for unvaccinated travellers trying to enter the nation. Djokovic's visa was eventually cancelled and, after a legal appeal failed, he departed without playing.



Liverpool edge through despite Inter defeat

LIVERPOOL: Mohamed Salah admitted Liverpool might have suffered from complacency as they crept into a fourth Champions League quarter-final in five years despite a rare 1-0 defeat at Anfield to Inter Milan on Tuesday. The Italian champions were unable to scale the mountain they had to climb after losing the first leg 2-0 at home three weeks ago despite Lautaro Martinez's sensational strike into the top corner just after the hour mark. Alexis Sanchez's red card shortly afterwards punctured any Inter momentum and Liverpool comfortably held out with the extra man despite slipping to just a third defeat in 44 games in all competitions this season. The Reds had been on a 12-game winning run to keep alive their hopes of a historic quadruple of trophies. After lifting the League Cup last month, Jurgen Klopp's men are now into the last eight of both the Champions League and FA Cup and have a game in hand to cut Manchester City's six-point lead at the top of the Premier League. And Salah hopes they can learn from a rare off night in front of goal as they failed to score for just the fourth time this season. — Agencies

Ramiz Raja backs the Pindi Stadium pitch used for first Test

DNA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Ramiz Raja has spoken about the condition of the pitch used for the recently concluded Test match in Rawalpindi. Speaking in a video released by the PCB, Raja addressed the concerns regarding the "dead wicket" but backed the flat track in Pindi Stadium.

"I understand fans' frustration and a result would have been good but this is a three-match series. We need to remember that there is a lot of cricket to come still. Just for the heck of it, we don't want to prepare a fast and bouncy pitch and play into Australia's



hands," said Raja. "We also had limited resources for this Test...when you have a disturbed bowling and batting pair which is raw, you prepare according to that. Then

we didn't have a leg-spinner ready because Yasir Shah was unfit," he added. Raja admitted that "a drawn Test match isn't a good advertisement for Test cricket" but he reiterated his stance on making good pitches all over Pakistan.

"I came in September and the season had already started. It takes five to six months to prepare a pitch. When the season finishes you will see that we are bringing in soil from Australia and we are experimenting here with soil experts. We will redo 50-60 pitches all over Pakistan as soon as our season ends in March-April," he said. Both teams play the second Test match on March 12, which will be played at the National Stadium Karachi.

Barcelona in Europa League trophy hunt

SPORTS DESK

PARIS: Barcelona and a rejuvenated Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang and Europa League specialists Sevilla will spearhead Spain's challenge in the last 16 of the competition on Thursday.

Sevilla host English side West Ham in the first leg while Barcelona take on Turkish club Galatasaray at the Camp Nou, in two of the most attractive ties of the round. Five-time European champions Barcelona are still adjusting to the unfamiliar surroundings of the continent's secondary competition after crashing out of the Champions League in the group stage for the first time in 18 years. They face Galatasaray at Camp Nou on the back of their best run of the season after four victories in a row, including an impressive 4-2 win away at Napoli in the previous round.

They sit third in La Liga and have not lost in the league since December, boosted by a busy January transfer window in which they signed Aubameyang from Arsenal as well as

Ferran Torres and Adama Traore. Aubameyang and Torres have scored seven goals between them in Barca's last five games. "We have four wins in a row and this hasn't happened for a long time," said

coach Xavi Hernandez on Sunday. "The players believe in what we are doing. We are on the right path."

The Europa League is still Barcelona's only realistic hope of winning a trophy this sea-



son and there remains a defensive fragility that will offer opponents encouragement. But Barca will be heavy favourites against a Galatasaray side that have struggled recently, winning only twice in their last 15 matches.

Sevilla, who have won the Europa League four times in the last eight seasons, will face a West Ham side who are battling for a trophy. The Hammers' chances of finishing in the top four of the Premier League are slipping away, with Arsenal now firm favourites to secure the final Champions League spot and Tottenham and United still battling too. West Ham captain Mark Noble said his team's fighting performance in the 1-0 defeat to Liverpool last Saturday would restore belief after a rocky patch in which they were also knocked out of the FA Cup. "That performance will give us a lot of belief and hopefully we can take that into the Europa League now," Noble said on the club's website.

"It's exciting and hopefully we can perform like that because Sevilla are a top team and we are going to need to perform well."

No-trust doomed to...

FROM PAGE 01

adding that a PTI MNA told him that he was offered Rs200 million.

Imran Khan also lashed out at Pakistan Muslim League-N President Shehbaz Sharif and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's chief Fazal-ur-Rehman for joining Zardari in a bid to save one another. He accused Zardari and Sharif of coming up with different excuses on the occasions of hearings of court and the National Accountability Bureau.

He said Shehbaz Sharif had laundered billions of rupees to his son and son-in-law abroad, while Fazal-ur-Rehman possessed wealth worth billions even without owning any business. "I will further reduce electricity prices by retrieving public money from them," he said, adding that in near future, all these corrupt would end up in jail. The prime minister said the gang of dacoits had got united against him, adding that the corrupt were not making the move to save the country, but themselves.

As the country progressed in the right direction, he said, the situation was greatly irking the thieves and dacoits. He mentioned that due to the effective policies of the government, the country witnessed record exports, tax revenue, and foreign exchange. Imran Khan said Pakistan was in favour of maintaining friendly relations with all countries, but not at the cost of its own integrity. He mentioned that he had not given any statement against the European Union, but reminded it that Pakistan was its ally in the war against terrorism which cost the country over 80,000 casualties.

The prime minister said the war on terror resulted in the internal displacement of 3.5 million people in the country's tribal areas, regretting that the sacrifices were not acknowledged by the world. "Therefore, we will support peace but will not side with any country in a war," he said.

On the other hand, he pointed out that Zardari and Nawaz Sharif during the 10 years of their rule did not speak against over 400 drone strikes on the country. "They did not utter a word against the drone attacks because they worship these countries as their wealth is secure and safe there," he said. "They will never stand with the national interest."

Opposition leaders fire...

FROM PAGE 01

opponents today clearly shows he is not in his senses," Marriyum said, adding, "However, all these threats will have no effect on the no-trust motion the opposition will table against his government in the next few days." "It's time for those minting money through wheat and sugar crises to go to jail," she commented. She accused the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) of receiving funds from prohibited sources and also concealing them from the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP).

Meanwhile, the opposition leaders on Wednesday fired back at the tirade of Prime Minister Imran Khan in Karachi and said that the writing was on the wall for him. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz posted a tweet addressing the prime minister. She wrote a poetic comment: "Sometimes on the Arsh (throne); sometimes on the floor. Sometimes at home; sometimes in exile. It's all in your love [O seat], we were humiliated everywhere."

She also asked the premier to wait a bit. "There is still time in no-confidence motion, but you have already surrendered and become opposition."

While reacting to Prime Minister Imran Khan's speech in Karachi, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) spokesman Aslam Ghauri said that Imran Khan was an unnecessary, non-serious, and a wasted element in Pakistani politics. "He should have resigned by now had he got a bit of shame," he added.

Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Senator Sherry Rehman said that the long march of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari was still testing nerves of the PTI government. "It seems Zardari alone has overwhelmed the entire government," she added.

Briefs

Belarus' 2020
crackdown
violated
rights: UN

GENEVA: The Belarusian government's crackdown on opponents, civil society, journalists, and lawyers has violated the rights of tens of thousands, said a report by the UN Human Rights Office released on Wednesday. The report, mandated by the UN Human Rights Council, found that the perpetrators of these rights violations have not been held accountable.

"The examination not only lays bare the violations inflicted on people trying to exercise their fundamental human rights, but highlights the inability of victims to access justice," UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said in the report.

"The authorities' extensive and sustained actions to crush dissent and repress civil society, independent media, and opposition groups, while at the same time shielding perpetrators, points to a situation of complete impunity in Belarus," said Bachelet, the high commissioner for human rights. The report details the findings of an examination by Bachelet's office on human rights in Belarus. The review covered the runup to the Aug. 9, 2020, elections and aftermath up to Dec. 31. — APP

1,000 fighters
from Germany
traveled to
Ukraine

BERLIN: Nearly 1,000 foreign fighters from Germany have traveled to Ukraine to join the international legion to fight against Russia, Bild daily reported on Wednesday. More than 22,000 volunteers from around the world have so far joined Ukraine's International Territorial Defense Legion, Ukrainian officials told the newspaper.

In the first week of the war, nearly 500 people from Germany traveled to Ukraine to fight against the Russian troops, and this number has now reached to 1,000, according to the report. There was no reliable information about the nationalities or the political affiliations of the volunteers. German authorities said last week that there could be Ukrainian residents among those volunteers, but also German extremists, as well as neo-Nazis. Authorities so far identified less than 10 individuals, with ties to far-right groups. Interior Ministry spokesman Maximilian Kall told a news conference on Friday. The Ukrainian government created an international legion last month, soon after Russian troops began their military offensive on Feb. 24, and invited foreigners who are willing to defend the country to join the fight. — APP

PepsiCo
suspends
production,
sale in Russia

NEW YORK: US-based multinational food, snack, and beverage corporation PepsiCo suspended the production and sale of its beverage brands in Russia, according to a statement by the company. The company said late Tuesday that it is also suspending capital investments and all advertising and promotional activities in Russia. PepsiCo, however, said it will continue to offer other products in Russia, including daily essentials such as milk and other dairy offerings, baby formula, and baby food. "By continuing to operate, we will also continue to support the livelihoods of our 20,000 Russian associates and the 40,000 Russian agricultural workers in our supply chain as they face significant challenges and uncertainty ahead," the statement said. The company said it has donated food, milk, and refrigerators to relief organizations, and increased the production of foods and beverages in neighboring countries to meet the rising need. It is also donating a total of \$4 million to the Red Cross in Poland, World Vision in Romania, the World Food Program, World Central Kitchen, and Save the Children, the company added, saying it continues to match up to \$1 million raised from its employees. — APP

Pakistan-China to renegotiate
current phase of FTA benefits

The country wants more concessions exclusive to its products, like rice, to have more market access and to increase its share in bilateral trade

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and China are expected to renegotiate the current phase of Free Trade Agreement (FTA)'s benefits as the trade results for 38 export items to China have not been very encouraging, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. Pakistan has started drafting a renegotiation exercise concerning these export items to China.

The country wants more concessions exclusive to its products, like rice, to have more market access and to increase its share in bilateral trade. According to the officials from the Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan started deliberations with China to renegotiate terms and tariff lines for the second phase of the FTA during Prime Minister Imran Khan's recent visit to China. Pakistan hopes that talks might be completed before the conclusion of the budgetary

exercise for 2022-23. One of the major incentives to Pakistan in developing an FTA with China was to have stronger bilateral economic ties and greater economic integration with a friendly country, with whom it is said to have an 'all-weather friendship'.

However, whilst trade between the two countries increased significantly, trade gap



also appeared. This widening trade deficit between Pakistan and China has become a challenge for both countries. A study earlier conducted by the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) showed that although 7,550 products (Eight Digit HS Code) were covered under China Pakistan FTA for Pakistan's export to China list, Pa-

kistani exports were only concentrated in 350 product lines making it 4.6% of the total concessional products. By comparison, imports from China to Pakistan were recorded in 3800 products out of 6803 products, on which Pakistan offered concessions; hence China utilized 55.87% out of the total products.

The second phase of the China Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA) spanning 2019-2024 was finalized between the two countries in early 2019 and entered implementation from January 1, 2020.

The second phase has generally been well received by business groups and domestic industries in Pakistan. Pakistan's domestic industries previously raised concern over the ineffectiveness of the first phase in protecting the local industry from competitive Chinese imports. The second phase therefore, introduced safeguard mechanisms that can more effectively protect the domestic industry in China and Pakistan.

Ukrainian-Russian
FMs to meet in Turkiye

KYIV: High-level Russia-Ukrainian talks set for Thursday in Turkiye are largely thanks to the efforts of Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, Ukrainian media quoted the country's top diplomat as saying. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba confirmed that he will sit at the negotiation table in Antalya, Turkiye with Sergey Lavrov, his Russian counterpart, Ukrainian news agency UNIAN reported. "The meeting, planned to be held on March 10, will be held primarily thanks to Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu," UNIAN quoted him as saying, referring to a meeting on the sidelines of Turkiye's Antalya Diplomacy Forum. "I do not know whether (President Recep Tayyip) Erdogan convinced (Russian President Vladimir) Putin or Lavrov, but the meeting will take place."

Saying that Lavrov has been avoiding any meeting with him either one-on-one or as part of the Normandy Quartet for two years, Kuleba said: "Now he suddenly agreed, maybe he wants to convey something. We will listen, but I will talk to him with the understanding that Lavrov is one of the architects of the aggression against Ukraine." Asked whether Russian-occupied Crimea and Donbas will be discussed during the meeting, Kuleba said that Ukraine is not in a position to give up anything in the negotiations. — Agencies

UK to supply anti-aircraft
missiles to Ukraine

LONDON: Britain intends to supply Ukraine with anti-aircraft missiles to help its defense against the Russian invasion, Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said on March 9. "It is vital... that Ukraine maintains its ability to fly and suppress Russian air attack," Wallace told parliament. "In response to Ukrainian requests, the government has taken the decision to explore the donation of STAR-Streak high-velocity man-portable anti-air missiles. We believe that this system will remain within the definition of defensive weapons, but will allow the Ukrainian force to better defend their skies." Wallace said the decision had been made in principle to supply the weaponry, and the government was working out how to get them into Ukraine and train Ukrainian forces to use them. If confirmed, the supply would mark a significant step in Britain's support for Ukraine. Britain's support, however, has been limited to defensive weaponry. — APP



Minsk: Pakistan ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider attended opening ceremony of the exhibition "Kollegium NEW" held at Orsha Gallery. Ambassador also spoke about Pakistan and its diverse cultural landscape and importance of expanding cultural ties. — DNA

Ambassador Hassan meets
NU chairman Yahya Staquf

DNA

JAKARTA: Ambassador Muhammad Hassan met with Mr. K.H. Yahya Cholil Staquf, Chairman of the Executive Board of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest and most influential religious organization of Indonesia on 8 March 2022.

Mr. Yahya is a renowned intellectual figure in Indonesia and a confidante of President Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo. He has previously served as

Deputy Speaker of the Parliament and Spokesperson to former President Abdurrahman Wahid.

During the meeting, the Ambassador underscored the need to establish close connections and collaboration of the religious communities and organizations of the two countries.

He highlighted the problems faced by the Islamic world, including the issue of religious extremism, islamophobia in the West, Afghanistan, and Jammu and Kashmir. Both exchanged

ideas of bilateral cooperation on these issues. The ambassador also briefed him on the situation in IOJK and the rise of Islamophobia in India.

The Ambassador stressed that Indonesia should use its good relations and impress upon India to stop its anti-Muslim policies, especially in IOJK and come to negotiation table with Pakistan to find peaceful solution of all contentious issues. Mr. Yahya also expressed his intention to

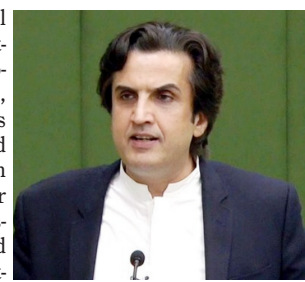
work with Pakistan Ulama Council to promote religious harmony and fight Islamophobia.

Highlighting the importance of the forthcoming 48th Session of the OIC CFM being held in Islamabad this month, the Ambassador stated that the issue was expected to be discussed by the Foreign Ministers of the OIC countries during the event. Ambassador also expressed hope that Indonesia will actively participate in the event.

Pak to overcome
fertilizers shortage

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will overcome fertilizers shortage and improve its production with China's help, according to Industries Minister for Industries and Production, Makhdoom Khuro Bakhtyar, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The minister chaired the fertilizer review meeting that discussed the domestic production and demand of fertilizers for the coming 2022 Kharif (summer) season.

The government had geared up to ensure a smooth, adequate and timely supply of key soil nutrients to farmers in the upcoming Kharif season and decisions had been made accordingly. The Minister hoped that like last year, the domestic production of urea will be maintained to fulfill domestic needs, and import of urea from China will help meet additional requirements. He directed all provincial agriculture departments to prepare district-wise supplies plan as per agronomic demands for the next Kharif season. He informed that 100,000 tons of urea will arrive from China as the government had imported it to facilitate farmers. It was told in the meeting that the carrying cost of each urea bag is worth Pakistani Rs 2-3 (two to three). — DNA

Iraqi
delegation
visits Kocha
Risaldar

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Iraq government Wednesday visited Kocha Risaldar mosque, where 68 persons were martyred in a terrorists' attack, and expressed grief and sorrow with the bereaved families. The delegation led by Fadhil Abbas Saleh and comprised of Imam Masjid Haram Imam Hussain, Osama Abdul Hamza Abdullah, Hussein Adnan Merza, Ghaith Basim Abdulhadi, Ali Muhmedkadem Ali and Hani Mohsinridha. The delegation strongly condemned the terrorists' attack and termed it a cowardly act by enemy of Islam. They expressed solidarity with the bereaved families and the government and people of Pakistan and said they were equally mourned the killing of innocent people. The delegation offered Fataha for the departed souls and prayed early recovery of the injured. Later Imam Masjid Haram Imam Hussain Osama Abdul Hamza Abdullah gave Azan at the mosque and the delegation offered Namaz there.

S Korea's two
presidential
candidates in
tight race

SEOUL: A scandal-plagued liberal and an anti-feminist conservative were locked in a dead heat Wednesday in the race to become South Korea's next president, with exit polls showing the two leading candidates less than a percentage point apart. Turnout was high at 77.1 percent, including record early voting, with interest strong despite a campaign dominated by mud-slinging between the two front-runners — the incumbent Democratic Party's Lee Jae-myung and the opposition conservative People Power Party's Yoon Suk-yeol. The pair, both so unpopular that local media have branded it the "election of the unfavourables", have been neck and neck for months, and an exit poll by three major television networks showed Yoon at 48.4 percent and Lee at 47.8 percent. Another poll by broadcaster JTBC, meanwhile, flipped those results, with Lee at 48.4 percent and Yoon at 47.7 percent. Members of Lee's Democratic Party broke into cheers when the polling data was announced at South Korea's parliament, where the campaigns have gathered to watch the vote-counting process, while Yoon's conservative supporters were mostly quiet. "Close exit polls reflect women's fear of having Yoon as president," said Kang Hoon-sik, a senior Lee camp official, referring to Yoon's avowedly anti-feminist stance. — APP

Turkey not to
cut Russian
oil imports

ANKARA: Sanctions on Russia will have a "terrifying" effect on the global energy market, Turkey warned on Wednesday, saying it will continue to buy Russian oil, while also expressing hopes sanctions on Iran are lifted, a move that would bring additional supplies to meet global demand. Separately, the World Bank warned oil price hikes driven by the Russia-Ukraine war would slash growth for big importers. Turkey relies on Russia for 45% of its natural gas demand, 17% of oil and 40% of its gasoline, Deputy Energy and Natural Resources Minister Alparslan Bayraktar said in remarks on the sidelines of the CERAWEEK energy conference. "The world needs more oil," Bayraktar said. "It needs to come from somewhere, from the United States, from Venezuela, from Iran, Saudi Arabia, or wherever we need it to be," he added. Bayraktar stressed Turkey could not easily replace its Russian oil supply from elsewhere and added, "they have been old, reliable suppliers." The West's moves to isolate Russia economically for attacking Ukraine have hit hard global commodity and energy markets, sending prices spiraling out and threatening to derail the nascent recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. — APP

EU needs to redefine defense strategy: Estonian PM

The war on Ukraine has drawn international condemnation, led to financial sanctions on Moscow, and spurred an exodus of global companies from Russia

WEB DESK

BRUSSELS: The EU must redefine its defense strategy and show a "willingness to use military strength," Estonia's prime minister said on Wednesday. Speaking at the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, Kaja Kallas warned that the bloc must "exercise strategic patience because peace is not going to break out tomorrow" in the Russia-Ukraine war. "In terms of security, we have changed more in the last couple of weeks than we have in last 30 years," with the EU starting to act as a "geopolitical union," said Kallas, whose small nation used to be part of the Soviet Union and now borders Russia. At the same time, she argued that the EU has to stick to its sanctions and support Ukraine's independence because Russian President Vladimir "Putin will come to test

us." Kallas called on the bloc to redefine its defense strategy and strengthen continental security by "smart containment." She stressed that "a stronger European defense means planning or spending wisely and in coordination," strictly in cooperation with NATO. "In stepping up European defense, we must find consensus within the EU that sometimes, the best way of achieving peace is the willingness to use military strength," Kallas stressed. EU leaders later this week are expected to adopt the bloc's new defense strategy presented by EU foreign policy Josep Borrell. The document — officially called Strategic Compass — sets concrete proposals and timelines for strengthening EU defense, such as setting up a swiftly deployable EU force of 5,000 troops, investing in industrial capabilities, and securing the bloc against cyberattacks. The war on Ukraine has drawn international condemnation, led

to financial sanctions on Moscow, and spurred an exodus of global companies from Russia. The EU has adopted three sanctions packages against Russia, targeting among others President Russian Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, excluding seven Russian banks from the SWIFT international banking system, and banning broadcasting activities of the Sputnik and RT/Russia Today media outlets. At least 474 civilians have been killed and 864 others injured in Ukraine since the beginning of the war on Feb. 24, according to UN figures. Over 2 million people have also fled Ukraine to neighboring countries, UN high commissioner for refugees Filippo Grandi said on Tuesday.



Briefs

ISPR releases promo for Pakistan Day

RAWALPINDI: Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) on Wednesday released the first promo of 82nd Pakistan Day celebrations to be held on 23rd March to unveil theme for this year's commemorations. The ISPR's promo underlined that it was the 82nd Pakistan Day and 2022 was unique as this year marked Diamond Jubilee of Independence of Pakistan. The theme for this promo series is 'Shad Rahey Pakistan' (May Pakistan remain happy) which was prayer and 'Markaz e Yaqeen Shad Baa' (May the citadel of faith remain secure forever), a line taken from the National Anthem. - APP

US rejects Poland's offer to send fighter jets to Ukraine

WASHINGTON: The United States has rejected Poland's offer to send its MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine via a US airbase in Germany, saying the proposal raised "serious concerns" for the entire NATO alliance. Warsaw made the surprise offer on Tuesday amid repeated appeals from Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for more warplanes to replenish his country's air force as it defends against invading Russian forces. The Polish scheme proposed that the Russian made MiG-29 fighter jets be delivered to a US base in Ramstein, Germany, and then be deployed to Ukraine. But Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the prospect of the jets flying from a US-NATO base "into airspace that is contested with Russia over Ukraine raises serious concerns for the entire NATO alliance".

PML-N, Tareen group discuss in-house change

LAHORE: In another major development, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leadership on Wednesday contacted Jahangir Tareen group to get their support on a no-trust motion against PM Imran Khan. During the conversation, the in-house change in Punjab was also discussed, sources said, adding that PML-N leadership and Tareen group also decided to continue contacts. Earlier in the day, Former senior Punjab minister Aleem Khan, who has joined hands with disgruntled PTI leader Tareen, departed for London. Mr Khan left for the United Kingdom (UK) capital on board his private plane. Sources said Aleem Khan will meet Jahangir Khan Tareen.

Tarin opposes PM's public outburst against EU envoys

Federal Minister also underlined the need for researching on alternatives to minimize the dependency on imports of palm oil and soybean

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin on Wednesday expressed his opposition to Prime Minister Imran Khan's public outburst against European Union envoys in a rally in Vehari. Speaking to the media in Islamabad, Tarin said the PM should not have slammed the EU envoys in front of the public. Federal Minister also underlined the need for researching on alternatives to minimize the dependency on imports of palm oil and soybean. Chairing the National Price Monitoring Committee (NPMC) meeting here, the federal minister also asked for devising a strategic plan for meeting the demand of these commodities. The minister directed the Balochistan authorities to ensure stability in the prices of wheat flour by maintaining the daily release of wheat to flour mills and asked the relevant authorities to analyze and estimate wheat stocks closely. The minister also directed Ministry of Commerce to formulate a viable plan for price determination of potatoes. He directed the Ministry of Commerce to formulate a viable plan for price determination of potatoes while the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (NFS&R) was asked to expedite process to formulate forecasting unit for major and minor crops for timely decision making. On the occasion, he commended the efforts being undertaken for stabilizing the prices of essential items successfully and measures to ensure smooth supply of essential commodities throughout the country. Earlier, Economic Adviser Finance Division briefed the NPMC about weekly Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), which



witnessed increase of 0.04% as compared to increase in previous week by 0.51%. As many as 33 food items contributed increase in the SPI by 0.32%, whereas 18 non-food items contributed decrease of 0.28% to the SPI. NPMC was informed that prices of 19 items remained stable in the last week while the prices of 13 items decreased contributing decline in SPI by 1.16%. The items which contributed in decline included petrol (0.53%), eggs (0.11%), tomatoes by (0.51%) and others by (0.01%). Prices of 19 items slightly increased that led to increase in SPI by 1.20%. These included chicken (0.34%), fresh milk (0.25%), LPG (0.23%) and others (0.38%). NPMC was informed that tomatoes, eggs, hi-speed diesel, petrol super, garlic, pulse moog, pulse masoor, onions, wheat flour bag, sugar, potatoes, pulse mash, gur and chil-

lies powder have shown decline in the prices during the last week. It was informed that prices of onion are lowest as compared to its prices 3 years earlier. The NPMC was updated on the wheat flour prices in the country while the Secretary Ministry of NFS&R informed on the stock position of wheat and further apprised on the future requirements and the strategy for sustainable availability of wheat in the country. The committee was also apprised on the sugar prices in the country and Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production briefed the meeting on the process for building strategic reserves of sugar in the country to maintain stability in prices. Sugar price is at Rs. 89 again with a decline of -0.3% which is highly plausible. NPMC was also briefed on the prices of pulses in the country and was informed that there was stability in price of Gram pulse, while price of Moong pulse decreased by Rs. 6 per kg during last six weeks. Price of Mash pulse decreased by Rs. 3 per kg during last six weeks and price of Masoor pulse decreased by Rs. 2 per kg during last six weeks. It was apprised that prices of eggs decreased by Rs. 32 per dozen during last 6 weeks and overall there is improvement in market supply of eggs, onions, potatoes and tomatoes. The price of potatoes has decreased by Rs. 4 per kg during last 6 weeks while there has been increase in the price of chicken due to supply disruptions. These disruptions are linked with sudden increase in demand of chicken, but it was ensured that the prices of chicken will be back to normal price in near future. On the prices of palm oil and Soybean in the country, Secretary Ministry of Industries and Production informed the meeting on available stocks of edible oil.

Cricket: Fawad disappointed over "dead" pitch

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Wednesday expressed his disappointment over the "dead" pitch prepared for the first test match of historic Pakistan, Australia cricket series. In a tweet, he said "Extremely disappointed on PCB choosing a dead wicket for an historic test match." "With such a furious Pak pace attack why would we need such dead pitches", he questioned. Expressing his annoyance over a pitch also termed "benign" by the Australian players, the minister said test match was held after 24 years but the track was pathetic. He hoped that the PCB would give positive cricket a chance in next matches. - APP

Murad says 4 PTI MPAs voted for Nisar Khuhro

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that four PTI MPAs, showing their 'no-confidence' in the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, cast vote in favor of PPP candidate Nisar Khuhro in the senate election held in Sindh Assembly on Wednesday, similarly the PTI MNAs would vote in favor of no-confidence resolution filed in the National Assembly by joint opposition against Prime Minister Imran Khan. This he said while talking to the media along with Senator-elect Nisar Khuhro just after the unofficial announcement of Senate results.

Israeli president welcomed in Ankara

ANKARA: Israel's President Isaac Herzog was welcomed in Turkey's capital Ankara Wednesday with an official ceremony. Herzog was initially welcomed at Ankara Esenboga International Airport in the capital by Ibrahim Kalin, a top aide and spokesman for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

China-India military level talks on March 11

BEIJING: China and India will hold 15th round of military commander level talks to discuss and resolve the boundary issue at Chushul-Moldo border point in eastern Ladakh on March 11. "On the boundary issue, I have an update for you. As agreed by the two sides, China and India will hold 15th round of military commander level talks on March 11," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Zhao Lijian said on Wednesday. "In the last round of talks, the two sides had candid in-depth exchanges of views on resolving the remaining issues on the western sector of the boundary," he said during his regular briefing held here. The spokesperson hoped that at the upcoming talks, the two sides could make a further step forward on the border issue. "We hope we can seek proper settlement of the disputes and reach a solution that is acceptable to both sides," he added. The 14th round of military talks between the two neighbouring countries held in January this year to resolve the border confrontation that began in mid-2020. The corps commander level talks ended with a joint statement but with not any real progress. Responding to a question, the spokesperson said that Foreign Minister Wang Yi at his annual press conference on the sidelines of 'Two Sessions' made clear China's position on developing China-India relations. Zhao Lijian hoped that Indian side could work with China to enhance mutual trust and practical cooperation to ensure that bilateral relations could move along the right track so as to deliver greater benefits to the two peoples and make greater contribution to the region and beyond. - DNA

Chief of Naval Staff visits Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi is on official visit to Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During the visit, the Naval Chief called on Military Advisor to Minister of Defence Maj Gen Talal Abdullah Al-Otaibi and Commander Royal Saudi Naval Forces Vice Admiral Fahad Bin Abdullah Al Ghofaily. The Naval Chief also witnessed World Defence Show organized by MoD KSA and called-on Commander US NAVCENT Vice Admiral Brad Cooper. During separate meetings with Military Leadership of KSA and Cdr US NAVCENT matters of mutual interest including bilateral defence collaboration and maritime security in the region were discussed. The Naval Chief highlighted Pakistan Navy's instrumental contributions for ensuring maritime security and stability in the region including Regional Maritime Security Patrols and participation, as well as leadership of multinational naval task forces within ambit of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). The dignitaries appreciated



Pakistan Navy initiatives in support of collaborative maritime security in the region and acknowledged significance of strong bilateral defence collaboration. It is expected that visit of the Naval Chief will further augment and expand defence ties between the two countries in general and navies in particular.



RAWALPINDI: Ms Pang Chunxue, Chinese Charge d' Affaires to Pakistan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. - DNA

Chinese Charge d' Affaires meets Gen. Qamar Bajwa

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Ms Pang Chunxue, Chinese Charge d' Affaires to Pakistan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, defence collaboration, progress on CPEC and regional security were discussed in detail. COAS said that Pakistan values China's role in global and regional affairs and we

look forward to enhance our bilateral relationship. He reiterated that all regional countries need to work collectively for enduring peace and stability. The visiting dignitary thanked COAS for special measures taken for provision of safe and secure environment to CPEC projects in Pakistan and efforts towards regional stability. She also expressed satisfaction over progress on CPEC and ensured to play her role for further improvement in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels.

Project for weather surveillance radar inaugurated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An inauguration ceremony for "the Project for Installation of Weather Surveillance Radar at Karachi", funded by Japan, was held with Mr. ISOMURA Toshikazu, Consul General, Japan Consulate office Karachi, Mr. FURUTA Shigeki, Chief Representative, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Pakistan Office, H.E Mr. Ghulam Sarwar Khan, Federal Minister for Aviation and Mr. Sahibzad Khan, Director General, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). In this project, a new Weather Surveillance Radar was installed in Karachi at an approximate total cost of JPY 1.95 billion (approx. USD 17.71 Million) with the Japanese grant assistance. The radar has been operational since April 2021. Japan supported the installation of four (4) radars in Pakistan. This Karachi radar covers the southern part, for a radius of 450 km. With all the radars provided in Karachi, Islamabad, Multan (to be installed), and Sukkur (to be installed), the surveillance systems will cover more than 80% of the areas of Pakistan. The radars will be used for short-term weather forecasts, in-

cluding monitoring thunderstorms and other atmospheric phenomena in the four provinces. These state-of-the-art radar systems would enable Pakistan to effectively assess the probability of precipitation around the clock. They will result in a more accurate weather forecast, delivering early warning in a timely manner. "30 years ago, Japan supported the previous Karachi radar project with enthusiasm and I am excited to build on our effort to assist the disaster risk management in Pakistan.", said Mr. ISOMURA Toshikazu, Consul General of Japan in Karachi. "I hope that the project enables Pakistan to forecast weather more accurately and contribute to the disaster resilience in Pakistan.", said Mr. FURUTA Shigeki, Chief Representative, JICA Pakistan Office. Pakistan has a high frequency of natural disasters such as floods, landslides, cyclones, and earthquakes. Quite notably, every year, Pakistan experiences heavy damages to the large parts of the country due to floods triggered by heavy rains during the monsoon season. The Government of Japan and JICA will continue to assist the disaster risk management initiatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

MARCH 2022

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