



# Islamabad POST

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### China calls on Pak, India to launch probe into missile incident

Detailed News On Page-08

### Iran minister to hold talks in Moscow

Detailed News On Page-08



### CM approves online system of procurement

Detailed News On Page-08



## Briefs

### Will 'act according to law': NA Speaker

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser said Monday he would follow the law during the voting on the no-confidence motion after the Opposition took strong exception to his remarks about the possibility of failure of the no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan. In a conversation with journalists in Islamabad, the NA speaker said the no-confidence motion was the Opposition's constitutional right, but he did not specify a date for the session.

### Govt, allies partners on same page

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Asad Omar said on Monday that the ruling coalition parties had assured the Prime Minister of their full support against the no-confidence motion. Talking to a private news channel, he said that the opposition would not succeed in any move against the government. He said that PTI government along with its allies would protect national interests on all fronts. He said that we are satisfied with the cooperation of the coalition partners, adding that at present the entire PTI stands firmly with Prime Minister Imran Khan. — APP

### Elon Musk challenges Putin

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: SpaceX founder Elon Musk has challenged Russia's President Vladimir Putin to a fight, he tweeted Monday. "I hereby challenge Vladimir Putin to single combat," Musk wrote on Twitter. "Stakes are Ukraine," he continued tweeting, writing the country's name in its language. In a tweet thread, he continued in Russian, saying, "Do you agree to this fight?" mentioning Kremlin's English official account.

# Pak desires strong ties with the US

### While talking to the Ambassador-designate to the United States, PM hailed the partnership based on shared goals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday said the Pakistan-US relations were based on partnership and shared goals, as Pakistan desired strong ties with all the countries, including the United States. He was talking to Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to the United States of America Masood Khan, who called on him. Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi was also present during the meeting, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The prime minister directed Ambassador Masood Khan to work for further strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries. He said connectivity of the Pakistani diaspora was one of the top most priorities of the government and the US was home to a very vibrant Pakistani community, which acted as a bridge between the two countries. He also directed the ambassador-designate

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### PM bars leaders from giving statements regarding allies

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Monday that the government is going nowhere and the no-confidence motion and conspiracy against Pakistan will fail. The prime minister barred party leaders from giving statements regarding coalition partners. The chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said that the number game of the opposition parties has turned on its head, ahead of a no-confidence motion against him. This was stated by PM Imran Khan during an all-important

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# Zelensky raises breakthrough hopes at 'difficult' talks

NEWS DESK / DNA

KYIV: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Monday that ongoing talks to halt two weeks of fighting with Russia were progressing with difficulty, but raised hopes a breakthrough could be announced later in the day. The Ukrainian leader confirmed that "difficult negotiations" were underway with the Russian side, aimed at finding a diplomatic solution to Moscow's invasion of his pro-Western country. "A video meeting between the delegations has already started today. It continues," Zelensky said in a

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### US warns China against helping Russia

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: China will face consequences if it helps Russia evade sanctions in its invasion of Ukraine, the US says. Unnamed US officials reportedly told multiple news outlets that Russia had asked China to provide military assistance after it began the invasion. The Chinese foreign ministry accused

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs meeting of PTI Core Committee. — DNA

### Voting on no-trust move on 28th NA session on March 21

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Senator Faisal Javed announced on Monday that voting on the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan will take place on March 28. The PTI leader confirmed the much-awaited date during an informal conversation with at the Parliament House. The senator also told the media outlet that the National Assembly session has been requisitioned for March 21. But later, the senator backtracked from the statement and tweeted that the vote on the no-confidence motion, without specifying a date, would take place after March 27. "The biggest jalsa of Islamabad will take place on March 27 (Sunday). Prime Minister Imran Khan will deliver a historic speech. And the voting on the no-confidence motion will take place after March 27."

# No-trust motion to give fatal blow to opp.

### During Core Committee meeting, the entire party stood by the PM: Fawad

SHJUAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Husain on Monday said imminent failure of no-trust motion would definitely give a fatal blow to the opposition, bent upon hatching conspiracies against a democratically elected government. "All the cards are with us and we will decide what might be the next move and whatever the next move should be, I assure you that it will be the last game of these 'three jokers' who will simply vanish from political scene after failure of the no-trust motion," he said while addressing a news conference after meeting of Pakistan Tehreek-e-



### Have complete faith in our allies: Qureshi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Monday said the PTI had complete trust in its allies in the Centre — Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Grand Democratic Alliance and the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) — amid the opposition's attempts to woo them for the no-confidence resolution against Prime Minister Imran Khan. "I have been

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### Rangers to takeover red zone security

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The interior ministry on Monday has decided to hand over the security of Islamabad's Red Zone to Rangers and FC from March 20 to April 2. Well-informed sources said the interior ministry has decided to summon Rangers in Islamabad's Red Zone from March 20 to April 2 to maintain law and order. As many as 2,000 personnel of Rangers and FC will be deployed. It must be mentioned here that from March 20 to April 2, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) moot will be held, March 23 parade and all the all-important session of the National Assembly

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# Pakistan to deepen coop with Germany

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi Monday underscored the high value Pakistan attached to its relations with Germany, saying it was determined to further deepen its collaboration with Germany across all areas of mutual benefit. The foreign minister spoke on telephone with German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. Discussing the situation in Ukraine, Qureshi said it was a grave moment in Europe's history. He apprised his German counterpart of the prime minister's phone conversation with Charles Michel, President of the European Council, as well as his own phone calls with the foreign ministers of Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Hungary and Russia and with Josep Borrell, High Repre-



sentative of the European Union. In all these contacts, he said, Pakistan had stressed the importance of cessation of hostilities, establishment and maintenance of humanitarian corridors, provision of humanitarian assistance and continuous efforts for a solution through dialogue and diplomacy. The foreign minister briefed Baerbock over violation of Pakistan's airspace by an Indian missile on March 9. He said

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Opposition parties leaders share table on the occasion of dinner hosted by PML President Shehbaz Sharif. — DNA

# PPP, MQM-P agree to work together

### Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and former president Asif Ali Zardari met the MQM-P delegation

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Two major political parties PPP and MQM-P have come to an agreement and decided to work together for the country's "greater interest", said a spokesperson of the Bilawal Bhutto-led party. According to a PPP statement, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and former president Asif Ali Zardari met the MQM-P delegation. The political situation in the country was discussed during the meeting and PPP has agreed to keep better and permanent relations with MQM-P, said the spokesperson. On the other hand, sources privy to the meeting shared that the PPP and MQM-P have agreed on provincial-level matters. PPP leaders Yousaf Raza Gillani, Saeed Ghani, Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah, Sharjeel Memon, Rukhsana Bangash and others were present during the meeting.

### Ministers, friends trying to cajole Aleem

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: As the pressure mounts on the PTI-led government in the Centre in light of the Opposition's no-confidence motion, several federal ministers and mutual friends have become active to gain the support of disgruntled PTI leader Aleem Khan, who recently joined Jahangir Khan Tareen group, sources said on Monday. Aleem Khan joined Tareen's PTI faction with the

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Pakistan-China friendship police post inaugurated — Page 07

China calls on Pak, India to launch thorough probe — Page 08

## MARCH 2022

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## Briefs

Education  
Departments  
Celebrates  
Punjab Culture

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Education Departments celebrated Punjab Cultural Day 2022 under the title "Wasda Punjab" here on Monday with the participation of a large number of students and faculty members.

The participants enjoyed rich and fascinating culture of Punjab showcased through folk music presentations, bhanga dance, horse dance show, poetry. Several participants wore thematically planned traditional Punjabi attire. Relishing traditional foods was a top notch activity of the day. Various stalls were set up to attract the younger generation with the enchanting culture of Punjab. The stalls featured and displayed— Punjabi rahtal (daily routine usage utensils), Kheis (blankets of various design), Sarson & Gandla da saag (Green leafy vegetable), Jalebiyan (sweet dish) weaver's khaddi, bangles & hina, chitrakari (painting), namkeen & meethy chawal (sweet and salty rice), lassi' etcand much more.

In the beginning of the day, a walk headed by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naem was also held on the Govt Girls School to give awareness to the students about the culture, customs and traditions of Punjab. Punjabi dance performance on the beats of dhol were also held which enthralled the audience.

Deputy Commissioner visited the stalls and expressed his profound love for the culture of Punjab. He said that celebrating the day will encourage the students to understand, promote and preserve their cultural heritage. The day was celebrated on the instructions of the Punjab Government.

NADRA starts  
second shift  
to facilitate  
citizen

PESHAWAR: In order to facilitate citizens, the National Data Base and Registration Authority (NADRA) has announced to start evening shift from Monday (March 14). Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Interior, Shoukat Ali while taking notice of the complaints of people and keeping in view huge rush in morning hours at NADRA offices has requested the government to start evening shift of NADRA.

On the directives of federal government, NADRA started second shift at its office located at Deans Trade Center, Peshawar Saddar. The parliamentary secretary said that starting of second second shift will facilitate employees of public and private sectors as they could not visit NADRA office due to their duties in the morning. He said now citizen will not face difficulties in getting national identity cards and availing other services. He said that NADRA office will be opened till 10 p.m at night. — APP

## Court Notice

**In The Court of  
Khuda Yar Civil  
Judge Gujrat**  
Title: Khaleel Ahmad  
Verses: Province of  
Punjab etc.

Suit for Declaration with consequential Relief with permanent Injection  
Notice to:  
5-Raeesa Mushtaq  
W/o. Khaleel Ahmad,  
6- Muhammad Nawaz  
S/o. Muhammad Ali  
R/o. Noor Jamal Shumali  
Tehsil Kharian  
District Gujrat.

Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendant is not to be served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendant will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 9 AM on 16-03-2022. Otherwise case will be decided ex parte.



LALAURE: Senior PPP leader and former Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira, Former Tehsil Nazim Kharian and Chairman Municipal Committee Kharian Nadeem Asghar Kaira and others posing for a picture on the occasion of wedding of Dr. Waqas, son of senior journalist Attaullah Cheema. — DNA

Pashtun Jirga demands end  
to involvement in adm affairs

Barrister M Ali Saif said Armed forces have no concern with administrative affairs

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The three days Grand Pashtun Jirga convened by Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party of Mahmud Khan Achakzai at Bannu concluded with demanding an end to armed forces involvement in every sort of administrative and political affairs of the country, ensuring supremacy of parliament, rule of law and due share and autonomy to Pashtuns and an end to every sort of interference in internal affairs of Afghanistan. It also asked for early release of MNA Ali Wazir.

On end of three days jirga, the organizers Monday morning issued four pages declaration which was framed in according to results of questionnaires, filled by participants. Similarly, point of views of leading speakers, especially office holders and representatives of different political parties also adjusted in the Jirga's declaration. The Jirga besides leading PMAF leaders headed by Mahmud Khan Achakzai and office holders was also attended by office holders and representatives of other parties. ANP's Dr Khadim Hussain, NDM Afrasiab Khattak and PTM Manzoor Pashteen were prominent amongst them. A number

of highly educated intellectuals and technocrats also attended the Jirga and participated in the detail discussions over existing hardships of Pashtuns, scattered throughout the country and over 40 years long conflict across the border in Afghanistan. Besides detail political speeches, discussions and debates, Musical events and poetic sessions also remained part of the Jirga. Bannu- the southern city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a legacy of Jirga's and consultation pertained to problems and hardships of Pashtuns.

At once considered center of freedom fighters associated with All India Congress and Khudayee Khidmatgar Tehrik of late Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan commonly known as Bacha Khan, first ever Pashtun Jirga held at Hatikhel Bannu in 1956, whereas it was concluded with the demand of an independent Pashtun state of Pakhtunistan. There is doubts about late Bacha Khan's reaction as some circles believe that he had opposed the resolution, demanding Pakhtunistan as an independent state. However, Pakhtunistan later remain an important part of Radio Kabul transmissions. While demanding early release of Ali Wa-

zir MNA from South Waziristan and withdrawal of all cases registered against him, the Jirga has also constituting of Facts Finding Commission with due representation to Pashtuns (members of this jirga) for probing target killing of ex-Senator Usman Kakar, Prof. Arman Looni, Police officer Tahir Dawar and others. Likewise, it also expressed serious reservations over anti-terror policies of security forces and as well state.

The Jirga has also demanded free trade and business opportunities to Pashtuns living on both sides of Pak Afghan border. It recalled that Pashtuns suffered a lot due to prolong imposed and external hostilities in Afghanistan. Likewise the Pashtuns deserves maximum relief in taxes and duties on internal trading and also traditional border trade with Afghanistan. Referring to continued crises in Afghanistan, the grand Pashtuns Jirga has termed it "outcome of incursions in its internal affairs from abroad, especially from neighbouring countries." It demanded an end to every sort of foreign interference in internal affairs of Afghanistan, insisting on "ensuring of an opportunity to Afghans for deciding fate of their country and destiny at own."

## Government response

In reaction Grand Pashtun Jirga declaration, Barrister M Ali Saif said, "all affairs of government is run by politically elected government. The Armed forces have no concern with administrative affairs. Armed forces determined are determined to ensure safety of country's geographical borders and some time extending helping civilian security forces in combating terrorists." Similarly he said that ALI Wazir cases are pending before courts, therefore, courts may be approached for the purposes. He said that all others facing similar cases needs to approach the judiciary, which is independent and deciding cases on merit and justice.

Barrister Saif said, "there is no any discrimination against Pashtuns in the country." The Pashtuns he said, "are in a dominant position in all spheres of life after Punjab." He also diverted attentions towards maximum representation to Pashtuns in present political set up, reminding that besides Prime Minister Imran Khan, opposition leader Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman, Mahmud Khan Achakzai, Aimal Wali Khan and several others are all Pashtuns.

Faisalabad celebrates  
Punjab cultural day

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Under the directions of the Punjab government, Punjab Culture Day was observed throughout the district and main ceremony was held at Jinnah Bagh. Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain, Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad, CPO Ghulam Mubashar Maiken, parliamentarians Latif Nazar, Firdous Kai and PTI leader Mian Azad Kasro inaugurated the Culture day. ADCC Qaiser Abbas Rind, AC City Sahibzada Muhammad Yousaf, Director Arts Council Zahid Iqbal and others were also present. The world record holder Sadii Ahmed pulled the car through his moustache. Horse and Camel dance were also presented while rally was also held at the evening the fireworks also worked. Divisional Commissioner and other officers visited the stalls and appreciated the efforts of stall holders. The officers of the divisional and district administrations wore traditional Punjabi dress shalwar kameez, waist coat besides traditional turban on their heads and carried out official matters in their offices. They also holding official meetings in the offices and also listened to the prob-



FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain visiting stalls on Punjab Culture Day. — DNA

lems of the public who were heading to the offices for work related to various government departments. The Divisional Commissioner said Centuries-old Punjabi culture is being highlighted on the direction of Chief Minister Punjab. He said that the culture of Punjab includes the colors of all the nations of the beloved homeland. Deputy Commissioner said that Love, peace,

brotherhood, unity and tolerance are the hallmarks of Punjab's culture and Punjab has a unique place at the international level. He said that the purpose of Punjab Culture Day was to further spread the beautiful colors of Punjab culture. He said that only nations connected with culture move forward and the soil of Punjab smells of love, hospitality and morality.

Punjab Cultural  
Day celebrated  
in Gujrat

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: In connection with Punjab Culture Day on Monday (March 14), several colorful programs were organized in Government and private institutions to mark the day in the district. All government officials including Deputy Commissioner Dr. Khurram Shehzad, District Police Officer and heads of other departments wore their traditional attire and participated in the celebrations of the festival. DC and DPO said that purpose of celebrating Punjab Culture Day was to spread the message of love. Four gamblers arrested Gujrat: Shaheen Chowk police have arrested four gamblers in Mohalla Tahli Pura and recovered the huge amount put on gambling. Police have booked Bilal,



Khizar, Abrar Bhatti and Suleman Bhatti.

## No-trust move against PM bound to fail

KAMRAN GUJJAR

JHELUM: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) District President Chaudhry Ghulam Ahmad Zamrud Yaqub and General Secretary

Chaudhry Faraz Hussain have said that Prime Minister Imran Khan has taken the country on the path of development, enhanced the dignity of the country and nation at international level. PM highlighted the issues facing Muslim

Ummah globally. The world recognized the leadership abilities of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of "Meet the Press" program at Jhelum Press Club. Other PTI leaders were also

present on the occasion. He said that the no-confidence motion was hatched by the opposition to cover up its corruption in the past and for fear of lawsuits. Prime Minister Imran Khan will thwart it with the help of Allah and the people. Thousands of PTI Jhelum workers will attend the rally in D-Chowk Islamabad to show solidarity with their leader. Chaudhry Faraz Hussain said that PTI government's health card and Kamyab Nojwan Program are great projects. "We are working for the re-organization of PTI Jhelum," he said. Has developed a strategy to appease angry peers and activate the women's wing and youth wing. District President Chaudhry Ghulam Ahmad Zamrud said that journalists are an important part of society. We believe in the critique of reform. Every journalist has the right to point out problems. The power of the pen is greater than the power of the gun. Inshallah, we will work with Jhelum Press Club not only for the journalists but also for the development of the city.



JHELUM: PTI Jhelum leaders addressing a press conference to show solidarity with their leader Imran Khan. — DNA

FCCI to  
finalise  
proposals for  
next budget

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Budget preparation has been started and every segment of the economy must compile its sector specific proposals and forward its recommendations so that the FCCI (Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry) could finalize these in proper format for onward submission to the Ministry of Finance, said Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh President FCCI. He was addressing the maiden meeting of the FCCI standing committee on the Faisalabad Dyes & Chemicals Merchants Association (FD-CMA). Welcoming the participants of the meeting, he said that he himself belonged to this group and hence he intends that FDCMA should take lead in finalizing their budget proposals, so that it could be incorporated in the federal budget.

He said that FDCMA has so far given five Presidents to this august trade body and you should be more responsive to solve the problems of the business community in general and of this group in particular. He said that all segments must finalize their proposals and provide the same to the FCCI so that it could be prepared in accordance with the format provided by the Government. "These proposals would be forwarded to the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and FCCI", he said and added that FCCI will play a key role in the budget formulation. He expressed concern over the notices issued to the members of the FDCMA and said that he would have a meeting with the Chief Commissioner Inland Revenue to settle down this issue.

Mr. Jawad Shafique President FDCMA pinpointed the problems of the commercial importers of dyes & chemicals and said that they would finalize their budget proposals very soon.

Spring  
festival kicks  
off at UAF

FAISALABAD: A 15-day spring festival started at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) here on Monday. UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan along with all deans, directors, students and other people inaugurated the festival. The first day of the festival started with a three-day flower exhibition and agricultural exhibition. In these exhibitions, dozens of the varieties of flowers were displayed while different technologies of the agricultural were exhibited before the gathering in order to promote the latest agricultural technologies and techniques.

Talking to the participants, Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that flowers give the message of peace. He said, "We have to spread the fragrance of brotherhood, respect and work collectively for the uplift of our country." He said that the festival meant to provide a platform to the farming community, academia and industry to sit together for addressing the issue of the agriculture sector. — APP

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## Briefs

## Uniform curriculum to be implemented this year

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education, Shafqat Mahmood said the government will implement uniform curriculum from Grade VI to Grade VIII this year and from Grade IX to XII next year. "The uniform curriculum was implemented from Grade I to Grade V last year while its scope would be extended from Grade VI to XII during this and next year", the minister said while addressing the opening session of Overseas Convention here Monday. He said the present government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, has decided to implement a uniform curriculum across the country. Earlier, different curriculum were being implemented in the country which created division, he said.

The minister pointed out that an agreement had been signed with Saudi Arabia for skills development of youth. While efforts are underway to provide facilities to overseas Pakistanis in the field of education, he said. Shafqat Mahmood said that all provinces had started extensive teacher training while 50,000 scholarships were being provided annually to female students. A number of students are returning to Pakistan after completing their education abroad and ready to contribute for national development which is encouraging, the minister expressed. - APP

## Govt gives importance to economy, environment

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam on Monday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government giving paramount importance to economy, environment and social development as these are key pillars of its governance.

Addressing the three-day Overseas Pakistanis Convention here, the PM's aide said PTI government pulled out the country from deep meshes of financial debts and economic crunch post Covid-19 pandemic with record tax collection and growing exports. Amin said in the economic realm, the PTI gov't's promising policies bore fruit and massive growth was witnessed in three sectors of agriculture, textile and housing, adding, "several other sectors are linked to the housing sector that drives the economic wheel." He said social development was the second pillar of the PTI government's strategy which also showed promising outcomes under visionary goals of poverty alleviation. The SAPM underlined that it was not the elite's Pakistan rather the fruits of economic prosperity would reach every social cohort of the country. Kamyab Jawan Program (KJP) and Sehat Insaf Card was part of the social development strategy, he added. - APP

## NACTA plans to hold 2nd national essay writing competition

ISLAMABAD: National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) has planned to hold the 2nd National Essay Writing Competition both in English and Urdu on three topics. The topics were included influence of video games on youth in promoting violent behavior, misuse of social media for on-line extremism and online radicalization and how to counter it and what are three major reasons for rising in violent extremism in society and how to address them, told official sources to APP here Monday. They said the first topic was for category-1 having age between 15-20 years and its limit was 1500 words, the second topic was for category-2 having age between 21-30 with 2000 words limit. Similarly, the 3rd topic was specified for professional writers/content experts with 3000 words limit, they said. They said cash prize of Rs 10,000 alone with a certificate would be awarded to the best essay in the each category. - APP

## Air Chief presides convocation ceremony held at Air University

Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, COAS Pakistan Air Force, who is also the Chairman Board of Governors; was the Chief Guest at the ceremony

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: 9th Convocation ceremony was held at the Air University main campus, Islamabad today. The ceremony spanned over two days and five sessions where 1700 shining & bright graduates from undergrad as well as the MS and PhD programs received their medals and degrees in Mechanical, Mechatronics, Electrical, Aerospace and Aeronautical Engineering disciplines along with the Business Administration, Accounting & Finance, Literature & Linguistics and Computer Science programs. Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of Air Staff Pakistan Air Force, who is also the Chairman Board of Governors; was the Chief Guest at the ceremony. While addressing the convoca-



tion ceremony, the Air Chief congratulated young graduates on their big day and wished them a bright future ahead. The Air Chief also emphasized on the valuable contributions and accomplishments

of Pakistan Air Force in quality education, skill training, innovation and creative technologies over the years. Among other endeavors of strategic importance, he also mentioned the initiative of National Aerospace Technology Park (NASTP), attributing the aerospace industry as the mother of all industries. Air Marshal (Retd) Javid Ahmed, Vice Chancellor Air University in his welcome address thanked Chief of the Air Staff for gracing the largest convocation in Air University's history with 2468 graduates. He also thanked the Air Chief for the whole hearted, unstinted support of Pakistan Air Force to Air University and assured him of following PAF vision of Quality Education, research, innovation and technology in true spirit and making meaningful contribution in national cause.

## Dr. Sania reviews Ehsaas Kafaalat payments of Rs.14,000

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Dr. Sania Nishtar on Monday reviewed Ehsaas Kafaalat payments recently increased upto Rs. 14,000. The Prime Minister has raised the six-monthly stipend amount of Kafaalat from Rs.12,000 to Rs.14,000. Following the Prime Minister's announcement, Ehsaas Kafaalat payments from January to June 2022 commenced on

field were discussed in detail. The meeting also discussed the zero-tolerance policy for those involved in illegal deductions. "Beneficiaries of the Kafaalat programme are the disadvantaged women with meagre or no means of income generation. We are fully striving to ensure that Kafaalat payments are made in the field with utmost ease and transparency", Dr. Sania said. "We are taking stringent measures to en-



March 7, 2022. Currently, a tranche of Rs. 71 billion is being disbursed in all Tehsils of the country to benefit millions of poorest women. To review disbursement operations under Kafaalat, Dr. Sania Nishtar convened several meetings today with the leadership of Habib Bank Limited, Chief Secretaries of provinces and IGs of Police. Secretary Ismat Tahira and all Director Generals of Ehsaas were also present in the meeting together with the Focal Persons of provinces. The pace of payments and issues emerging from the

sure that the full amount of Rs. 14,000 goes in the hands of beneficiaries and fraudsters are dealt with zero tolerance. All officers and teams are constantly in the field to monitor payments", she added. Dr. Sania also urged provinces to ensure better logistics and security arrangements at the campsites. All provinces assured full cooperation in this regard. Dr. Sania also asked partnering banks to address the issues of internet connectivity, point of sale machines and cash liquidity. - DNA

## CDA to start metro bus trial run from April

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Monday said the trial run of the metro bus service from Peshawar Morr to Islamabad International Airport (IIA) would start in the first week of April after the arrival of buses from China. The authority had planned to run at least 30 buses painted in orange colour on the route, however the current shipment was carrying 15 buses, CDA's senior official told APP. He said the ship transporting the buses would start its journey to Karachi on March 15. The ship was expected to arrive from China in 20 days. The launch of bus service, he said would improve the public transport facility in the city. The federal apex agency had announced to start bus service operation on March 23 but the same was de-



layed due to some unavoidable circumstances. The CDA took over the metro bus project in March last year from the National Highway Authority (NHA) on the direction of the federal government and started the process to procure the buses. For the fiscal year 2020-21, the government had earmarked Rs300 million for the project. The corridors and stations of the metro track had already been constructed and now command and control, ticketing, station management, cleanliness and security systems were being completed. In March last year, NHA after construction of the corridor and stations handed over the project to the CDA. The NHA had launched work on the 25.6km-long track from Peshawar Morr to IIA worth Rs16 billion in Jan 2017. The project was supposed to complete in Aug 2018 but its civil work was completed last year.

## AIOU organizes seminar on study of Quranic words

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has started the promotion of Quran and Sunnah teachings in the country. In this regard, an international seminar was held yesterday here at AIOU. Prof. Dr. Abu Sufyan Islahi of Aligarh Muslim University, India was the keynote speaker of the seminar while Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashimi, Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies presided over the seminar. Giving a lecture on Study of Quranic Words and Phrases, Dr. Abu Sufyan Islahi said that unless the Holy Quran is understood and read properly, guidance from this holy book cannot be obtained and the purpose of revelation is not fulfilled. He said that Holy Quran itself asks that whatever you read, you should understand. He explained the meaning and significance of various rare words of the Holy Quran. Prof. Islahi, while emphasizing on understanding the meaning and significance of Quranic words, said that these words are the choice of Allah and it is necessary for all of us to understand their meaning and



significance. He also mentioned the rare words of Surah Kausar, Surah Yaseen and Surah Rehman. Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashimi said that such conferences are very useful for scholars and researchers. Dr. Sanaullah Hussain, Chairman, Department of Quran and Tafseer, explained the aims and objectives of the seminar, thanked the guest speakers, organizers and scholars for attending the seminar. He said that this conference has been organized with the special support of Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Begum Samina Arif Alvi launching a book titled "101 Incredible Women CEOs of Pakistan", at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

## PECA ordinance undermines judiciary's independence

CJ Minallah summons attorney general on March 21 after petitioners conclude arguments

## AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD: The counsel representing the Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA) and other media bodies argued before the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday about the effect of the controversial PECA ordinance on the independence of judges. During the hearing of the petition filed by PBA, Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ), and other media bodies, counsel Muneer A Malik said Article 144-A of PECA undermined the independence of the judiciary and

the judges. The amendment to PECA makes it incumbent upon courts to conclude trials within six months and furnish monthly progress reports of pending trials, and orders federal and provincial officials to remove any obstacles that may hinder the progress of the proceedings. He further argued that the ordinances are issued through executive power which could be subject to judicial review. According to the lawyer, the Constitution allowed the issuance of ordinances under Article 89 in cases of emergency. Sharing a screenshot of President Arif Alvi's tweet with the court,

the lawyer said Alvi summoned a session of parliament on February 18 whereas the ordinance was also issued on the same day. PFUJ lawyer Adil Aziz said the session of the National Assembly was postponed which showed the mala fide intent of this law. Another lawyer, Sajid Tanoli, said the law was enacted to suppress the freedom of speech. He added the law was in contrast to the fundamental rights and should be declared void. Farhatullah Babar's lawyer, Usama Khawar, said Article 19-A that pertained to freedom of speech did mention some limitations but they pertained to national security,

blasphemy, provocation, and contempt of court. As the petitioners' lawyer conclude their arguments in the case, IHC CJ Athar Minallah summoned the attorney general on March 21 to represent the government. On February 20, President Arif Alvi promulgated the ordinance making online public defamation a cognisable and a non-bailable offense while increasing the jail term for defamation of any person or institution from three years to five years. Before the ordinance came into effect, Section 20, which pertains to the registration of complaints

against individuals by aggrieved parties over defamation, was a bailable and non-criminal offence. Subsequently, the bar councils and media bodies moved the high courts against the law and in a subsequent order, the Islamabad High Court (IHC) barred the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from arresting anyone under Section 20 of PECA. After a stream of criticism from the opposition parties, rights organisations, and civil society, the MQM-Pakistan - an ally of the ruling PTI - also joined the bandwagon, raising objections over the controversial ordinance.

## Govt notifies transfer, posting of officers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday notified transfer and posting of high rank officers. According to a notification issued by Establishment Division, Rashid Mahmood, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary, National Food Security and Research Division, is transferred and posted as Chief Secretary, Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, with immediate effect and until further orders. Muhammad Idrees Ahmad, a BS-20 officer of Police Service of Pakistan, presently posted as Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in Establishment Division, is transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of Government of the Punjab, with immediate effect and until further orders. - APP

## 5 new covid cases in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: One more patient had died while five others were diagnosed with fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 46,400 in the Rawalpindi district. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Monday, among the new patients, two belonged to the Rawal town and Rawalpindi Cantonment area and one from Gujjar Khan. "Presently, eight patients are admitted to three health facilities, including five in the Institute of Urology, two in the Fauji Foundation Hospital and one in the Bilal Hospital." The report updated that one patient was on a ventilator in critical condition, one stable and five on double oxygen support. As many as 5,681,924 people, including 44,670 health workers, had so far been vaccinated against the fatal disease since the start of the vaccination drive from March 10, it informed. District Health Authority added that 44,977 patients had been discharged after recovery out of total tested positives so far, adding 92 were quarantined, including 85 homes and seven isolation centres. - APP

## 63 suspects held during operation

RAWALPINDI: The police on special directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Omar Saeed Malik on Monday launched a search operation in Chak Bali and adjoining areas in the jurisdiction of Rawat Police Station, said a police spokesman. He informed that heavy police contingent, Elite Force, Special Branch personnel and Ladies police under the supervision of SHO Rawat Police Station conducted operation in the area and 63 suspects were checked and several interrogated. According to spokesman, the search operations to net criminals and proclaimed offenders were regularly being conducted under National Action Plan in different areas of the district particularly to ensure law and order. - APP

## 24 professional beggars arrested

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police, in a crackdown on professional beggars on Monday arrested 24 beggars to discourage the beggary and to 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 Waseem Riaz 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

## No fuel shortage, says Hammad

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar on Monday refuted a news item appeared in a section of the press about the shortage of fuel stocks in the country, teaming it "fake and contrary to the facts." "Some newspapers have carried out a news that only 5 days fuel stock is left. This is fake and contrary to the facts," the minister said in a tweet. Currently, Hammad clarified that the country had the "highest stocks cover" of diesel and petrol as compared to last many years, which were sufficient to meet needs of more than one month. - APP

## Decline in Covid-19 cases

**T**HE decline being witnessed in daily new Covid cases in Pakistan is a welcome news. With vaccination against the deadly virus going on, the citizens need to adopt standard operating procedures to put a long awaited halt to the pandemic. On Sunday, As per NCOC's stats, the country logged below 10 fatalities from coronavirus in a single day for the second consecutive day.

The country reported less than 500 new COVID-19 cases in a single day for the first time in 2021, data released by National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) showed Monday. With 1,024 more people recovering from COVID-19, the number of active cases now stands at 22,545.

Pakistan last reported an active case count this low on March 16 at 22,792 cases. The tally for recoveries, meanwhile, is now 1,222,559.

According to NCOC, the country recorded 482 fresh coronavirus cases today, the lowest level since October 18, 2020, when 440 infections were reported in a single day.

Meanwhile, 40,621 tests were taken over the last 24 hours and six fatalities were reported from the disease.

The positivity rate stood below 2% for the 15th consecutive day at 1.18%, which is said to be the lowest positivity ratio recorded by Pakistan since it started measuring COVID figures last year. There have been 1,273,560 infections and 28,456 coronavirus-related deaths reported in the country since the pandemic started. Pakistan is reporting 648 new infections on average each day, 11% of the peak – the highest daily average reported on June 17.

The country has administered at least 103,514,198 doses of COVID vaccines so far. Assuming every person needs 2 doses, that's enough to have vaccinated about 23.9% of the country's population.

During the last week reported, Pakistan averaged about 621,689 doses administered each day. At that rate, it will take a further 70 days to administer enough doses for another 10% of the population.

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## Ukraine war

**D**IPLOMATIC efforts to end the war in Ukraine are stepping up, with Ukrainian and Russian negotiators set to talk again after both sides cited progress over the weekend.

Ukraine said it had begun "hard" talks on a ceasefire, immediate withdrawal of troops and security guarantees with Russia, despite the fatal shelling of a residential building in Kyiv. Both sides reported rare progress at the weekend after earlier rounds have primarily focused on ceasefires to get aid to towns and cities under siege by Russian forces and evacuate civilians; those truces have frequently failed.

People fleeing what until recently had been the relative safety of western Ukraine joined thousands crossing into eastern Europe after Russia stepped up attacks, prompting fears of an even larger exodus.

Meanwhile, one of President Vladimir Putin's closest allies said Russia's military operation in Ukraine had not all gone as quickly as the Kremlin had wanted, the strongest public acknowledgement yet from Moscow that things were not going to plan.

On Monday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged NATO to impose a no-fly zone over his country. He warned that its member states would soon be attacked by Russian forces after an air strike hit a Ukrainian military base close to the Polish border.

Rather than build up weaponry in Europe, could the United States initiate negotiations about shared security, disarmament and a military stand-down? Could this war lead us to think more seriously about how to build peace rather than how to build weapons? It is the duty of the whole world to prevent this war from escalation, rather than provocation. If this not ends now in Ukraine, the flames will be felt all the way in Europe. The United States must do its part in getting the talks going.

## Wild west & cyber security

Sabah Aslam

United States- who consider itself a global beacon of democratic and a trusted ally of other like-minded democratic states- spearheaded massive disinformation campaigns, especially related to COVID-19

**J**ared Cohen former counter terrorism advisor to Hillary Clinton says "we live in a world where wars will begin as cyber wars... it's the combination of hacking and massive, well-coordinated disinformation campaigns". Cohen as other contemporary experts on Armed conflict emphasized on cyber warfare and disinformation. The method and techniques employed to protect the digital space from any malicious exploitation refers to cyber security.

To make a distinction between disinformation and a cyber attack is the target. Cyberattacks are aimed at computer infrastructure while disinformation exploits our inherent cognitive biases and logical fallacies. There is also a lot of similarity of the actions, strategies, tactics, and harms from cybersecurity and disinformation attacks. Infact, we see nefarious actors using both types of attacks for disruption. Using information operations and cyberattacks creates more havoc. They may lead with disinformation campaigns as reconnaissance for a cyberattack or data exfiltration from cyberattacks to launch a targeted disinformation campaign.

United States- who consider itself a global beacon of democratic and a trusted ally of other like-minded democratic states- spearheaded massive disinformation campaigns, especially related to COVID-19. During the pandemic, which has seen a hugely disproportionate death toll in the US (relative to its percentage of the global population), we have seen dem-

ocratically-elected political leaders flood the public discourse with disinformation in order to cover up the administrative laggings. United States spend more time and resource on blaming or shifting the public attention towards China rather introspecting the loopholes.

The report published by London school of Economics recently revealed that as part of defense strategy the United States should develop a strong collaborative relationship with the European Union (EU) in the digital and information sphere. This initiative could be included as part of a broader US government approach to the EU or be an exclusive objective for the US Department of Defense, which would narrow the relationship's focus and separate it from other issues such as energy, migration, and trade.

The report further suggests that by building a nexus USEU relationship would counter Russian and Chinese hybrid threats by unifying transatlantic defense and civilian digital and information governance. Big US tech companies may not like it, given their distaste for European regulations, but security needs should trump those concerns. Harry I. Hannah a retired Central Intelligence Agency officer in her writing hints about the same partnership between US-EU which would give leverage for regulatory capabilities and effectively unify western defense and civilian governance of the digital and information environments. She reiterated about shaping this environment by choosing it as battlefield and forcing adversaries to compete under preferred conditions.

According to a report from Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, The collaboration between US-EU should extend beyond periodic conferences. The permanent link must regulate capacities of the EU with the powerful military-security digital and information capabilities of the United States and NATO. This would require both the United States and the EU to compromise and implement changes that benefit the other at their own expense, with the goal of improving collective security.

Amidst cyber strategic environment which is being created by the west and the joint strategy to regulate capacity and military-security digital and information capabilities deterrence, SCO cannot rely on passive, defensive strategy. US and EU are actively considering

Chinese and Russian cyber capabilities as threats going defensively offensive over it. To many extent it does not seem to be a question of countering the perceived threats from China and Russia but to dominate the realm of cyber security and having an upper hand over Russia and China; a cyber arms race.

**Strengthening Cyber security mechanism for SCO member states**

Eastern understanding of cyber security varies from Western cyber security in that it considers not only network technical security but also the content of the Internet, they refer information security rather than cyber security. Russia views cyber security as information security in the same manner as China does. Furthermore, Russia's Information Security Doctrine, which was published in 2000, is the most important document for Central Asia.

The SCO applies its concepts of sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of nations, equality and mutual respect in the fulfillment of international standards, and the battle against the vicious triangle of separatism, extremism, and terrorism to the cyber sphere. In 2009, SCO member states signed an agreement on cyber security defining what member states as main threats in cyberspace while calling for mutual assistance and cooperation to thwart and overcome them. With a spike in cyber-attacks on China and Russia, anti-Cyber-terrorism drills were held in 2017 in Xiamen China with the participation of all the 8 member states, was aimed at improving coordination between them to counter such attacks.

SCO must call on its member states to co-operate in combating cybercrime and terrorist use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), not to use ICT for hostile activities and aggression, nor to proliferate information weapons. The strategy must envisage a wider coverage than just cyber-conflict, including Internet governance issues, information surveillance, and content policy.

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## SCO-ASEAN and the awakening of Asian giant

Syed Nasir Hassan

The rule-based order which was established after WW-II through creating global institutional oversight; mainly by west has been effective lately until it was challenged by the countries pursuing their national interests. The organisational setup which was not only scaled up on global level but subsequently the similar frameworks were erected on regional level as well. Minus national interests of the western countries, the primary idea was to have international governing body and have regional administrative bodies to benefit whole globe

**G**LOBAL political dynamics are rapidly changing with more actors rising on the hegemonic ladder. Now, any political turbulence in any corner of the world resonates across the globe and have its implications. It seems like globalization is on its pinnacle where whole world has been coalesced through various means. And one side where we recognize physical borders but still live in a boundaryless world, where everyone is connected. This has not achieved overnight rather there is a long global political haul which landed us on where we are. The neo-liberal institutional setup which shaped the contemporary world might be tattering for many but its importance cannot be ruled out. The rule-based order which was established after WW-II through creating global institutional oversight; mainly by west has been effective lately until it was challenged by the countries pursuing their national interests. The organisational setup which was not only scaled up on global level but subsequently the similar frameworks were erected on regional level as well. Minus national interests of the western countries, the primary idea was to have international governing body and have regional administrative bodies to benefit whole globe.

Given this impetus Asia also carried on with its joint frame work for regional cooperation with first forming Association for South East Nations (ASEAN) in 1967 followed by South Asia Association of Regional Countries (SAARC) in 1987 and then the creation of Shanghai cooperation

organization (SCO) in 2001. While first covered the countries in south East Asia the latter encompassed South Asia and SCO gathered central Asia along with China and Russia. All of the organizations centred upon the idea of bringing countries together who share borders and lie next to each other and create a mechanism to enhance cooperation and development of the region. While SAARC became victim of Pakistan and India the other two kept the sail and reaped considerable benefit out of it as well. ASEAN is considered to be the largest free trade bloc where vast amount of goods and products flow without tariffs to the countries. The combined annual GDP of ASEAN countries is around \$3trillion and is suspected to grow further. Similarly, SCO countries share combined GDP of \$18trillion. Not to forget that both organization host more than half of the world's population which means that there is enormous amount of human resource potential which is still untapped. It is also to be understood that both the organization are politically influenced as well. While ASEAN countries enjoy exclusive patronage of United States, the SCO led by Beijing and Moscow. United States is ASEAN's 4th largest partner but China also remains in top three. Similarly, Beijing influxes money for its silk route in SCO countries. However, if both cooperate whole of Asia's future would be forefront of global politics.

The current political order where on one side the subsequent role of the west and west-led organisations is declining there is a rise of the east. While Asia might be a western construct itself, however the progress Asia has made is purely its construct. The new economic hubs are under construction in east Asia and new trade routes are being made in resource rich central Asia. The collaboration among both the organizations would be no less than a Asian renaissance. Nevertheless, among many hurdles there remains one impediment which work as a hurdle among the cooperation of SCO and ASEAN which is territorial security. This also shows why many statesmen from US visited ASEAN countries just to put them in front of China. This can only be overturned if China and Russia both guarantee security through the cooperation among the organizations.

Both the organization hold enormous growth potential in them if they cooperate. Together they actually can make Asian century with collaboration, cooperation and coordination. In this regard a joint comprehensive apparatus can be drawn by members of both the organization which not only addresses the concerns of member state but guarantee security over it through joint security mechanism while similarly drawing economic mechanism premised upon mutual respect. Asian giant is not a country but whole Asia itself it can be achieved through collaboration on bringing sub-regional organization to regional and then global level or else the giant will remain asleep.

*-Syed Nasir Hassan is working with Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution - IICR as Program Coordinator. He is doing his M.Phil in Defence and Strategic Studies, from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.*

## Lessons from Russia-Ukraine war

Rana Tahir Shahbaz

If a country is devastated by war and the capacity to produce goods is sharply reduced, it can create the circumstances of hyperinflation as governments desperately print money to try and deal with the lack of goods. War can often lead to higher prices of oil because major conflict can threaten supplies

**W**AR adversely affects combatants and non-combatants alike, both physically and emotionally. Death, injury, malnutrition, illness, and disability are some of the most threatening physical consequences of war, while post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety are some of the emotional effects. The terror and horror spread by the violence of war disrupts lives and severs relationships and families, leaving individuals and communities emotionally distressed. Putting aside the very real

human cost, war has also serious economic costs - damage to infrastructure, a decline in the working population, inflation, shortages, uncertainty, a rise in debt and disruption to normal economic activity. If a country is devastated by war and the capacity to produce goods is sharply reduced, it can create the circumstances of hyperinflation as governments desperately print money to try and deal with the lack of goods. War can often lead to higher prices of oil because major conflict can threaten supplies. During war we often see a rapid rise in public sector debt.

Pakistan's economic situation may suffer its ability to weather conflict during a time of escalated tensions. Like an opinion, the answer to the question of Pakistan's next stance on Russia-Ukraine war has many layers.

The strong and firm response by Pakistani Prime Minister has sent uncertain waves among the country's financial market as the stock market has already started to respond negatively due to hesitant future of the country's relations with the western bloc. With the same position with Europe and India, Pakistan, in future, can face a ban of Imports /exports of medicines, machinery, technology etc; then we will be in difficult situation in Business Continuity System and even at government level; disturbance to thousands of Pakistani families living there.

No doubt, Pakistan is not a slave of Europe which could be stated diplomatically. What if Pakistan suddenly suffers with all restrictions? Experts are wary of Pa-

kistan's eyeballing the western bloc and fear that consequences of which may have a major impact on Pakistan's position and the country's efforts to gain diplomatic support from the west, in getting itself out of the FATF grey list.

Lessons are to be learnt from Russia-Ukraine war. Think about it, if Western Tech Giant such as Google/Apple/Microsoft/Meta/Oracle/IBM/Cisco/Ericsson are halting business with Pakistan or withdraw from Pakistan, how we can make life as normal.

Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Moscow amid the Ukraine crisis came under great scrutiny. Many political analysts questioned the timing of the visit, as it presumably gave the wrong signals about where Pakistan stood diplomatically in the Russia-versus-West confrontation. A dominant theme running in the print and electronic media in Pakistan was that Khan's visit was planned months in advance, that it was for concluding the negotiations over gas pipeline construction, and that it had nothing to do with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Pakistan's situation is less severe but more critical, however, the challenge for Pakistan will be to strengthen ties with Russia without alienating Western trade partners.

Pakistani prime minister is preparing to make "important visits" to Western countries after hosting a meeting of foreign ministers of the 57-nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Islamabad later this month.

## Briefs

## No-trust motion ...

FROM PAGE 01

Insaf's (PTI) core committee here. Flanked by PTI's Additional Secretary General, Aamer Mehmood Kiani, he said the opposition would remorse its no-trust move as Prime Minister Imran Khan had devised a comprehensive strategy to foil it. The entire party stood by the prime minister, said Fawad who expressed optimism that all the allied parties including Muttahida Quami Movement-Pakistan (MQM), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) and Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid would remain part of the PTI's alliance.

Sharing details of the core committee meeting with media, he said the entire party including leadership and its parliamentarians had reposed full confidence in the prime minister and resolved that only he could lead the country in these critical time. He said the core committee had not only rejected the opposition's bid to revive the horse trading culture, but also condemned their tactics of offering millions of rupee to the PTI's legislators for shifting their loyalties in case of the no-trust motion. Fawad said those, who offered bribe the PTI's legislators, did not dare to repeat the practice after it was brought into knowledge of the ruling party's leadership.

## Have complete...

FROM PAGE 01

constantly saying and will repeat today that I, as a political worker, believe that all our allies ... [are with us and] my party and I have complete faith in them. "We believe they are very refined and honourable people. They have supported us at various points in these 3 years and we were, are and will remain thankful to them," the foreign minister said while addressing a press conference in Islamabad. He said he trusted the government's allies to fully understand the opposition's tactics and the truth in their promises. "They are experienced politicians and they won't easily be fooled. To meet and listen [to others] is everyone's right but they understand everything," the foreign minister added.

Qureshi said the opposition would face disappointment in trying to win over the government's allies. The foreign minister's remarks come after the joint opposition submitted a no-trust resolution against the premier last week. The opposition has been engaged in talks and meetings with the government's allies recently and claims it has support from disgruntled PTI members as well.

## Ministers, friends...

FROM PAGE 01

aim to "save" the party after "loyalists were sidelined" following Prime Minister Imran Khan's rise to power. Khan, addressing a press conference after a meeting at Tareen's residence, said if a no-confidence is moved against Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar, then the group would decide a future course of action accordingly. Sources privy to the matter said that federal ministers including Fawad Chaudhry, Pervaiz Khattak and Amir Kayani are making backdoor contacts with the former Punjab senior minister and trying to address his reservations.

## Rangers to takeover...

FROM PAGE 01

for the voting on the no-confidence motion tabled by the opposition against PM Imran Khan, is also scheduled between the above mentioned dates. Rangers and FC troops will be deployed at the important buildings and roads in the Red Zone. Sources said that a notification in this regard will be issued soon. Earlier, Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed had said the security of the Parliament House and parliamentarians' lodges would be reinforced with the deployment of the Rangers and FC personnel on the day of voting on the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan.

# KPK team win 118th Murree Brewery Bhandara Polo Cup

## Ambassadors of various countries witness the final match



RAWALPINDI: Ambassadors of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov, Morocco Mohammed Karmoune, Ambassador of Japan, Czech Republic, CEO Murree Brewery Isphanyar Bhandara and others posing for a picture on the occasion of final of 118th M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup. - DNA

## DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Murree Brewery Company Isphanyar Bhandara has said that sports help in developing the mental and physical abilities of the youth. This builds

their character along with improving patience and courage in their personalities, because self-confidence in a person can play an important role in the country's development. He added that the players are assets of the nation and play an important role in promoting sports for the formation

of a healthy society. He expressed his views while talking to reporters after distributing prizes in the successful team at the 118th M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup Final in Rawalpindi. In the final FC KPK Team scored 9 goals to beat PAF team by 5 goals.

Ambassador of Czech Republic was the Chief Guest of this event. He appreciated the efforts of the Murree Brewery team for the promotion sports event went on to say that the inaugural M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo tournament was held in 1904.



JAKARTA: Pakistan ambassador Muhammad Hassan attended the inauguration ceremony of Asian African Youth Government (AAYG) 2021-2026, held in MRP building (People's Consultative Assembly). Chairman of People's Consultative Assembly Bambang Soesatyo was the Chief Guest of the occasion. - DNA

## Australia to replace Russia in Billie Jean King Cup Finals

LONDON: Australia will replace the suspended Russian team for the Billie Jean King Cup Finals, governing body International Tennis Federation (ITF) said on Monday. Russia was banned from defending its Davis Cup and Billie Jean King Cup titles following its Feb 24 invasion of Ukraine. Belarus, a key staging area for the invasion, which Russia says is a "special operation", has also been banned from the international team competitions.

The Australian team were the highest ranked side among the losing semi-finalists in 2021 and will take Russia's automatic spot in this year's Finals of the tournament formerly known as the Fed Cup. Slovakia, who were scheduled to play Australia in next month's qualifiers for the women's team event, will get a bye and also advance directly to the 2022 Finals, scheduled to be held in November.

Also advancing to the Finals - for which the host country has yet to be named - will be Belgium, after its side received a walkover in the qualifiers due to Belarus' suspension. The three sides will be joined by the host, last year's runner-up Switzerland and the remaining seven winners of the qualifiers on April 15-16. In the men's Davis Cup, also won last year by a Russian team led by top-ranked Daniil Medvedev, Serbia was awarded the automatic spot as the highest-ranked losing semi-finalist.

A wild card for the 2022 Finals that was previously awarded to Serbia will be handed to one of the 12 nations knocked out in the qualifiers earlier this month. The 12 winning teams from the qualifiers, 2021 finalists Croatia and wild card Britain are the other confirmed sides for the 2022 Finals, which will see 16 nations competing in four groups across four cities from Sept 14-18. - Web Desk

## Martic outlasts Raducanu, Halep tops Gauff at Wells

INDIAN WELLS: Petra Martic kept her composure in a seesaw battle with Emma Raducanu on Sunday to advance to the Round of 16 with a hard-fought 6-7(3) 6-4 7-5 win at Indian Wells. Raducanu was outstanding in the first set tiebreak, spraying winners around the court, but her energy and service speed dipped in the second set as she appeared to struggle with some physical discomfort and Martic took advantage to level the contest. The 11th-seeded U.S. Open champion Raducanu bounced back in the third and was serving for the match at 5-4 but the Croatian stepped up her defence to break the British teenager.

Raducanu sent a forehand long on match point to end the marathon, two-hour and 46-minute contest under sunny desert skies on Stadium One.

"I'm happy that I stayed calm when I was not playing so good," Martic said in an on-court interview.

"I think the match was up and down from both sides. We both had some good periods and bad ones out here, so I'm happy I was able to let that go and just focus on the next point."

The win was Martic's first over a top 20 opponent since 2019.

In the evening session, 2015 champion Simona Halep defeated Coco Gauff 6-3



6-4 to reach the second week. Gauff, who turned 18 on Sunday, had no answer for the Romanian veteran's superb shotmaking on a blustery night on Stadium One.

"I'm not scared of the wind. I never have been, even when I was a kid," Halep said. "I think I played smart tonight because from one side you had to play different, from the other side a little bit different. So I think I managed very well all the moments."



Wearing a ribbon with the colors of the Ukrainian flag, German Angelique Kerber beat Daria Kasatkina 6-2 6-1 and said she tried to put the fact that she was playing against a Russian out of her mind.

"Right now, there's much more important issues in the world," Kerber told reporters. "People are fleeing, the whole situation is topic number one and is frightening for everyone. As I've said, I don't live far from the situation. - Agencies

## Pak desires strong ties...

FROM PAGE 01

to work towards further strengthening of Pakistan-US relations, particularly for enhancement of trade, investment and public diplomacy. The prime minister while wishing Ambassador Khan success for his new assignment, emphasized on correctly projecting Pakistan's foreign policy priorities. Ambassador Masood Khan is an experienced diplomat and has previously served as Ambassador of Pakistan to China and Permanent Representative to the United Nations (including New York and Geneva). He had also served in Washington DC.

## PM bars leaders...

FROM PAGE 01

meeting of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) core committee in Islamabad to discuss the future court of action in the wake of the no-confidence motion, sources privy to the development said. "Allies stand firmly united the government and announcement in this context will be made soon," PM Imran Khan was quoted as saying by the sources. Prime Minister Imran Khan asked the PTI leaders to visit their constituencies, mobilize the masses and reach Islamabad D-Chowk to show strength during a public gathering on March 27. Sources said that the prime minister said that PTI leaders who were confused due to the prevailing political situation have seen the popularity of the party in recent public gatherings.

## Zelensky raises...

FROM PAGE 01

video statement Monday. "Everyone is waiting for news. We will definitely report in the evening." A fourth round of talks between Moscow and Kyiv began earlier Monday, a senior Ukrainian negotiator said, amid mutual claims of shelling and civilian deaths. Kyiv's lead negotiator and presidential aide Mykhailo Podolyak posted a picture on Twitter of video-conference talks with Russian officials and described the negotiations as "hard", saying that the two sides were outlining their "specific positions".

## US warns China...

FROM PAGE 01

the US of spreading disinformation. Russia denied asking Beijing for military help. The exchanges came before top US and Chinese officials met in Rome. US media outlets, citing Washington officials, say that Russia has in recent days asked China specifically for military equipment, including drones. In a CNN interview, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan said they were "communicating directly, privately to Beijing that there will absolutely be consequences for large-scale sanctions evasion efforts or support to Russia to backfill them". "We will not allow that to go forward and allow there to be a lifeline to Russia from these economic sanctions from any country, anywhere in the world," he said.

## Pakistan to deepen...

FROM PAGE 01

India had regretted what it called "accidental" firing of the missile, however, such a serious matter could not be addressed with the simplistic explanation proffered by the Indian authorities. Foreign Minister Qureshi further said Pakistan had called for a joint probe in the incident, and was also calling upon the international community to take serious notice of the incident of grave nature in a nuclearized environment and play its due role in upholding and promoting strategic stability in the region. The foreign minister said he looked forward to receiving the German counterpart in Islamabad in April to continue discussions. Foreign Minister Anshu appreciated the foreign minister for sharing his perspective on bilateral and regional issues, and said she looked forward to continue the discussions.

# Pak 148 all out in reply to Australia's 556

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Pakistan were all out for 148 in reply to Australia's first innings total of 556-9 declared on day three of the second Test at the National Stadium in Karachi on Monday. Skipper Babar Azam's 36 was the highest score for the hosts. Meanwhile, Mitchell Starc was the pick of the Australia bowlers, claiming 3-29. Australia, after declaring their first innings, reduced Pakistan to 100 for seven at tea to seize control of the second Test. Australian skipper Pat Cummins smashed three sixes in his unbeaten 34 off 36 balls against a jaded Pakistan attack on a slow track. Pakistan had reasons to feel let down by their in-form openers who showed poor judgment to depart either side of the lunch break. Abdullah Shafiqi made 13 before chasing a non-existent single only to be run out.



Imam, who smashed twin hundreds in the drawn series opener in Rawalpindi, paid the price for his heedless aggression in the first over after the

lunch break. The bespectacled left-hander stepped out against Nathan Lyon only to chip a head-high catch to Cummins at mid-on to depart for 20.

Starc then claimed two in two to rock Pakistan. The left-arm quick lured Azhar Ali (14) into driving a full and wide delivery and Cameron

Green grabbed the edge at second slip. Starc followed it with a searing yorker to trap Fawad Alam lbw for a duck.

Mohammad Rizwan somehow denied Starc a hat-trick but looked pretty much a sitting duck during his 13-ball stay. Dropped in the slip by Steve Smith off Cummins, Rizwan got another life in the very next ball when an lbw decision against him was overturned. It did not really matter though as Cummins returned to dismiss Rizwan caught behind in his next over. Starc owed his third wicket to Alex Carey who was convinced he had taken a catch from Sajid Khan even though the bowler himself was not sure and the umpire did not think so either. Carey convinced Cummins to review the original not-out decision and Sajid had to go after replays confirmed an edge. Australia are on their first tour of Pakistan since 1998, having previously refused to tour on security reasons.



**Briefs**

**Chinese cities lock down as outbreak spreads**

BEIJING: All 17 million people in the Chinese tech hub of Shenzhen began their first full day under lockdown Monday, as restrictions spread across Shanghai and other major cities to combat an outbreak challenging the nation's zero-tolerance Covid strategy. The southern city of Shenzhen imposed the measure on Sunday to counter an Omicron flare-up in factories and neighbourhoods linked to nearby Hong Kong, which is recording scores of daily deaths as the virus runs rampant. Major Apple supplier Foxconn suspended its operations in Shenzhen, the company said Monday, as the lockdown bid hard into economic activity across the factory hub. Shenzhen is one of ten cities nationwide to have locked down all residents, though the measure was taken Monday in some parts of other major hubs including Dalian, Nanjing and Tianjin, which neighbours the capital. Health officials have warned tighter restrictions could be on their way, as concerns mount over the resilience of China's "zero-Covid" approach in the face of the highly-transmissible Omicron variant. Authorities reported 2,300 new virus cases nationwide on Monday and almost 3,400 a day earlier, the highest daily figure in two years. - APP

**Ukraine's Chernobyl loses power again: operator**

**WEB DESK**

KYIV: Ukraine's Chernobyl nuclear power plant, the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster in 1986, has once again lost its electricity supply, energy operator Ukrrenergoprojekt said Monday. "The line that supplies the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and the town of Slavutych was damaged by the occupying forces," Ukrrenergoprojekt said on Facebook, referring to Russian forces that invaded Ukraine on February 24 and seized the plant in the first days of the assault. The retired nuclear plant - enclosed in a giant steel and concrete sarcophagus - lost power early last week but supply was restored Sunday. The plant has emergency diesel generators, which can temporarily provide the electricity needed to power security systems, including the cooling systems for a spent nuclear fuel storage facility. Ukraine's nuclear power inspection body SNRIU said last week. Ukrrenergoprojekt said the line was damaged again "before the power supply was fully restored" and that one of its repair crews will be going into "occupied territory" again for more repairs.

**Iran minister to hold talks on nuclear deal in Moscow**

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian will head to Moscow on Tuesday, his ministry said, days after negotiations to salvage the Iran nuclear deal stalled amid new Russian demands. "Russia has made its official demands loud and clear, and this needs to be discussed among all parties to the 2015 agreement, like all the demands that have been presented by other parties," foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told reporters on Monday. "The foreign ministers of the parties (to the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal) are in constant contact" and Amir-Abdollahian "will go to Moscow on Tuesday to continue the discussions," Khatibzadeh added. More than 10 months of talks in Vienna have brought major powers close to renewing the landmark 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on regulating Iran's nuclear programme. - APP

**Airspace violation incident**

**China calls on Pak, India to launch thorough probe**

Zhao Lijian also said that the Chinese side had noted the information regarding airspace violation incident. "We have noted the relevant information," he said

**NEWS DESK**

BEIJING: China on Monday called on Pakistan and India to launch a thorough investigation into incident of violation of Pakistan airspace and establish a notification mechanism in time to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and miscalculation. "Pakistan and India both of them are important countries in south Asia and they share responsibility to uphold the regional security and stability," Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Zhao Lijian said during his regular briefing in response to a question asked by APP regarding unprovoked violation of Pakistan's airspace by India. "We call on relevant countries to have dialogue and communication as soon as possible and launch a thorough investigation into this incident, strengthen information sharing and establish a notification mechanism in time to prevent the recurrence of such incidents and miscalculation," he added. Earlier, a Chinese

former defense attache in south Asian countries has asked the world community to probe Indian so-called clarification on supersonic projectile crash into Pakistani territory. He pointed out what excuse India may find, this was the unprovoked violation of Pakistani airspace, which should be strongly condemned. China's one of a prestigious English language newspaper has stated India's accidental missile fire into Pakistan airspace raised questions and concerns. Zhao Lijian also said that the Chinese side had noted the information regarding airspace violation incident. "We have noted the relevant information," he said when asked to comment on the incident. It may be mentioned that Pakistan had strongly protested and condemned last week's violation of its airspace by a super sonic flying object of Indian origin. Pakistan has also called for a thorough and transparent investigation of the incident which reflected India's disregard for air safety and regional peace and security.

**Pakistan condemns closure of Muslim girls' school in IIOJK**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has condemned the sealing off of an educational institute for Muslim girls in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In a statement, the Foreign Office (FO) highlighted that Indian forces gate-crashed Darul Uloom Khadijatul Kubra in the occupied territory on Friday, and insulted and maltreated the female students before forcefully evicting them. Thereafter, it added, the educational institute was sealed. "This illegal act is a fresh reflection of how Indian occupation forces are trampling on and making a mockery of the fundamental rights of Kashmiri girls seeking education," it remarked. It also added that the move points towards growing Islamophobia not only in the occupied territory but also in India. "Denying Muslim girls access to education, be that in IIOJK or in Karnataka, is a new low under a far-right Hindutva-inspired regime in India," it further stated. The FO pointed out that the deafening silence of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and lack of discernible action against 'Hindutva' proponents must send alarm bells across the international community about the gross and systematic human rights violations being perpetrated by India. It, therefore, called on the international community to take cognisance of the BJP-RSS agenda to socially and politically disempower the Kashmiris living in the occupied territory, especially the youngsters belonging to the Muslim community. It also called upon the international community, including the United Nations (UN) and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), especially their human rights bodies, to take immediate notice of the worrying level of Islamophobia in India, and to urge the Indian authorities to prevent systematic human rights violations against minorities, particularly Muslims, in the country. - Agencies

**Russian, Qatari ministers discuss Ukraine**

**AGENCIES**

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met with his Qatari counterpart Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani in Moscow on Monday to discuss the situation in Ukraine. Opening the meeting, Lavrov said he is going to inform Thani about "efforts that Russia is taking in to resolve all the issues that have arisen and accumulated over the years" in Ukraine. "We are also constantly interested in your assessments, your observations regarding the efforts that can be made to move towards solving numerous conflicts and crises in the Middle East and North Africa," he said. For his part, Thani said he expects peaceful solutions to the Ukrainian conflict will be found in the near future. "Qatar intends to make every possible effort to find diplomatic solutions and find a peaceful solution to the events taking place in Ukraine as soon as possible," he said. The Russia-Ukraine war, which began Feb. 24, has drawn international condemnation, led to financial sanctions on Moscow and spurred an exodus of global firms from Russia. At least 596 civilians have been killed and 1,067 injured in Ukraine since the beginning of the war, according to the UN, which says the actual toll is much higher. Some 2.8 million people have also fled to neighboring countries, said the UN refugee agency.

**Australia sanctions 33 more Russian oligarchs**

**WEB DESK**

CANBERRA: Australia on Monday joined its Western partners and announced fresh sanctions against 33 prominent Russian businessmen and their close relatives, official said. The sanctions targeted figures who amassed vast personal wealth, as well as economic and strategic significance to Russia and have close ties with President Vladimir Putin, the office of Foreign Minister Marise Payne said in a statement. Chelsea Football Club owner was among those hit by the sanctions, as were Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller, Rossviya Airlines Chairman Dmitri Lebedev, and head of defense conglomerate Rostec Sergey Chemezov. Nikolay Tokarev, CEO of pipeline transport company Transneft, along with Vnesheconombank Chairman Igor Shuvalov and Russian Direct Investment Fund CEO Kirill Dmitriev were also on the sanctions list. "We strongly support recent announcements by Canada, the European Union, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States of further restrictive measures against key Russian individuals," said Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne. Australia has so far imposed sanctions on 460 Russian individuals and entities, including a travel ban on President Vladimir Putin and other key civilian and military officials. - APP

**Overseas Pakistanis for holding OPIC yearly**

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Information Secretary of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Texas (USA) Chapter Nazia Khan on Monday suggested that the government should organize Overseas Pakistanis International Convention (OPIC) at annual basis to address the issue of expatriates. She expressed full confidence in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government saying most of their issues were resolved on the priority. Nazia regretted that the expats Pakistanis were given least attention during the tenures of previous governments. She appreciated the present government for launching multiple projects for their welfare. To a question, she said that all the Overseas Pakistanis were supporting Prime Minister Imran Khan in the current political situation. The opposition's no-trust motion against him was doomed to fail.



**RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov getting souvenir from CEO Murree Brewery Ispanyar Bhandara final of 118th M.P. Bhandara Memorial Polo Cup. - DNA**

**Int'l Day against Islamophobia today**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic world will observe the International Day to Combat Islamophobia on Tuesday to denounce rise in intolerance and discrimination against the Muslims and other minorities in the West, India and other parts of the world. Pakistan will also join the Islamic world to observe the Day as the country has emerged as one of the leading actors to raise its voices against Islamophobia. The credit for introducing the anti-Islamophobia Day on March 15 also goes to Pakistan's leadership as the country had presented a resolution at the 47th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Niamey, Niger in November 2020. Since then, the 57-member OIC has been working with the international community to commemorate this Day at the global level. At the world platforms, including the United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Imran Khan has been calling the world to act against Islamophobia and asking the world leaders "to act collectively to counter the growing phenomenon in non-Muslim states". In the recent past, the prime minister welcomed Trudeau's plan to appoint a special representative to combat Islamophobia, which he termed a "contemporary scourge". - DNA

**'No curb on media; PM believes in media freedom'**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting Senator Faisal Javed on Monday said Prime Minister Imran Khan believes in freedom of expression and no restriction on the free media. He was chairing the committee meeting, underlined the need for holding fruitful consultation on Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) law. Faisal Javed called for incorporating the worthy suggestions of media into PECA laws. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Secretary Shahera Shahid informed the committee that the PECA law did not come under discussion at the ministry. It mainly came under the purview of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication. Faisal Javed said the chairman of Joint Action Committee (JAC) had excused from attending the meeting. However, a committee had been formed since the media had expressed concerns over the PECA. All the stakeholders should be heard, he said, adding the officials concerned of the IT and Law ministries would be asked to attend the next meeting.

Senator Maula Bakhsh Chandio appreciated the move of consulting all the stakeholders on the matters of sheer importance. Faisal Javed underlined the need for evolving consensus among the all stakeholders to curb spread of fake news in the country. Senator Irfan Siddiqui inquired as to why the record of the prime minister's speeches was not maintained currently. The chairman committee directed to release the record of all the speeches made by Prime Minister Imran Khan since 2018. Secretary Information and Broadcasting told the committee that the ministry would formally request the press section of the Prime Minister's Office for providing material related to the speeches, which would be submitted in the committee after its compilation. Briefing the committee on the budgetary proposals for Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) for the financial year 2021-22 and 2022-23, the secretary said an amount of Rs 1899.530 million had been allocated for some 15 projects for the current fiscal year. - APP

**Germany to buy F-35 stealth fighter jets**

**NEWS DESK**

BERLIN: The German government wants to equip their air force with F-35 stealth jets in a modernization program worth billions, the German Press Agency (dpa) cited government circles as saying in Berlin on Monday. The Lockheed Martin combat jets are to be procured as the successor model to the Tornado fleet introduced more than 40 years ago. The F-35 is considered the most modern combat aircraft in the world and is also purchased for the so-called nuclear participation of Germany, a NATO deterrent concept in which allies have access to US nuclear bombs. The purchase of up to 35 stealth jets is part of the plan, according to the dpa report. The Tornado, which has been used up until now, can only be kept operational with increasing effort. This will be the first major procurement project for the modernization of the German military after Russia's attack on Ukraine. Germany is also planning to buy 15 more Eurofighters. However, the manufacturer Airbus has to technically equip these in the next few years, a task which is considered extremely demanding. Previously, the Defense Ministry's plans included purchasing the US F-18 aircraft, which has yet to be certified for use with nuclear weapons. After talks between Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht and Chancellor Olaf Scholz in January, a broader inspection order was issued and the F-35 was also considered. The F35 is already certified for nuclear weapons and equipped with limited electronic warfare. Earlier concerns of the German government that the purchase of the F-35 could counteract the joint plans with France to build a European "combat aircraft of the future" (FCAS/ Future Combat Air System) have now receded into the background. NATO partners in Europe also use F-35 and "synergy effects" are possible in operation.

**CM KPK approves online procurement system**

The decision was taken in a meeting held here the other day regarding E-procurement initiative with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan

**FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT**

PESHAWAR: In a bid to ensure optimum transparency in all kinds of public procurement and government contracts, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to introduce an online system from the upcoming financial year for all types public procurement and award of contracts by the provincial government departments. The decision was taken in a meeting held here the other day regarding E-procurement initiative with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan. In the chair. The meeting was attended by Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Finance, Administrative Secretaries of concerned departments and senior officials of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (KPPRA) has developed a new online e-procurement system

with all the required features for online procurement and award of contracts. It may be recalled here that the provincial government had already introduced e-bidding and e-tendering system for contracts in works departments, however, procurement of goods and services is still being carried out in traditional way in government departments. With the implementation of this e-procurement system, the entire process of procurement including procurement of goods and services as well as awards of contracts for construction work be carried out online. As per the decision made in the meeting all the provincial government departments will be required to carry out all types of procurement under the e-procurement system from the beginning of next financial year. Later on, the e-procurement system

will be extended to the autonomous bodies of the provincial government. The Chief Minister termed the e-procurement system as an essential for ensuring maximum transparency in government contracts and procurement process, and said that it would help eliminate male practices in the award of contracts and procurement process, and ultimately ensure quality of construction work. He said that transparency and merit in all government affairs was the most important component of his government's good governance strategy, and said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government not only believed in transparency but was taking serious steps for the purpose. He termed the new e-procurement system as a major initiative of the provincial government in

this regard, and directed the concerned authorities to finalize all the preparations and requirements for the implementation of this system in all departments from the next financial year. Briefing the meeting about the features of e-procurement system, it was informed that new system covers all types and methods of procurements having features of online registration and dashboard facility for contractors, suppliers and consultants, Online formation of Procurement Committees, Online preparation of Bid Data sheet, creation of Bid Evaluation Criteria, Online Availability of Bidding Documents, Online submission of both technical and financial bids, Online Submission Facility, Online Security Submission, system based award of contract to successful bidders and online registration of complaints etc. Under the new e-procurement system, the entire process of awarding contracts and procurement will be rendered paperless, and human interference will be minimized to the maximum possible level.

