



Islamabad POST

Thursday, March 17, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Babar Azam's heroic 196 lead Pakistan to earn a draw

Detailed News On Page-06

Ukraine war must stop; urges Turkey

Detailed News On Page-07



UN Resolution is a great achievement

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Fawad wants issued notice to PML-N

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Wednesday demanded that Election Commission of Pakistan should issue notice to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz for its leader Javed Latif's confession of indulgence in horse trading. In a tweet, the minister said that after the PML-N MNA's confession, in principle, the ECP should issue notice to the PML-N and seek clarification. However he opined that the ECP only takes notice of PTI activities. - APP

Time for PM to go

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Central Information Secretary of PPP and member of the National Assembly Shazia Atta Marri has said that we asked Prime Minister Imran Khan to resign in an honourable way but unluckily no single dignified work is written in the fortune of the Imran Khan. She said that no confidence motion against this incompetent government has succeeded and now even the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) could not save the Nazi Empire from his outer. She added that the curses of the employees which were fired from the Steel Mill has caught up Imran Khan and he had snatched roof from people by fake promising to build 5 million houses.

Opp. claims far away from reality

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister (FM) Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Wednesday said that our relationship with the allies is more than three years old. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader also said that if differences increase, one should push harder to get back the support of the allies. Shah Mahmood Qureshi further said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) is making offers to Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q) but the situation cannot be accurately analyzed from these interactions. - APP

Pak scraps all Covid restrictions

The only restriction that would continue is the vaccination against COVID-19, but that too till the vaccination ratio reaches 80% or above

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar on Wednesday said that the government is scrapping all the COVID-19 related restrictions across Pakistan.

"The pandemic has not ended yet but undergoing the ending phase," Umar said while addressing a press briefing of Asad Umar, flanked by SAPM on Health Dr Faisal Sultan at the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). Umar, who is also the NCOC chief, said that after reviewing the COVID-19 situation in the country in detail, the forum has decided to lift all coronavirus restrictions, including protocols for indoor dining, indoor wedding events and markets, sports activities and all the other SOPs across Pakistan. However, he said that the only restriction that would continue is the

Continued on Page 06

US envoy praises US-Pakistan partnership

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: U.S. Embassy Islamabad Chargé d'affaires Angela P. Aggeler visited the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on March 16 to recognize Pakistan's strong achievements in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. In a meeting with Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Mr. Asad Umar, and the

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ISLAMABAD: U.S. Embassy Chargé d'affaires Angela P. Aggeler receiving souvenir from Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Asad Umar, during her visit to NCOC. - DNA

Russia, Ukraine seek compromise in talks
Ukraine's President said the talks were becoming "more realistic"

NEWS DESK

KYIV/LVIV: Russia and Ukraine both emphasised new-found scope for compromise on Wednesday as peace talks were set to resume three weeks into a Russian assault that has so far failed to topple the Ukrainian government. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the talks were becoming "more realistic", while Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said there was "some hope for compromise", with neutral status for Ukraine - a major Russian demand - now on the table. The Kremlin said the sides were discussing status for Ukraine similar to that of Austria or Sweden, members of the European Union that are outside the NATO military alliance. Three weeks into the invasion, Russian troops have been halted at the gates of Kyiv, having taken heavy losses and failed to seize any of Ukraine's biggest cities in a war Western officials say Moscow thought it would win within days. Ukrainian officials have expressed hope this week that the war could end sooner than expected - even within weeks - as Moscow was coming to terms with a lack of fresh troops to keep fighting. Talks were due to resume on Wednesday by video link for what would be a third straight day, the first time they have lasted more than a single day, which both sides have suggested means they have entered a more serious phase.

PM tells Pakistanis Show the world that you stand with the truth

The PM urged the nation that they have to struggle against three "mice"

BUREAU REPORT

SWAT: Prime Minister Imran Khan Wednesday urged the nation to reach Islamabad on March 27 - when PTI is set to hold a massive rally - to tell the world that Pakistanis "stand with the truth and are against corruption". "People's conscience is being auctioned [...] it is the duty of people now to stand against evil," the prime minister said - referring to the no-confidence motion against him - while addressing a PTI jalsa in Swat.

Continued on Page 06

PM Khan is an honest person: Elahi

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Following a hard-hitting interview, PML-Q leader Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi has said that his party has not quit the ruling coalition nor

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and his wife posing for a picture before boarding the maiden PIA direct flight from Lahore to Baku. - DNA

PIA connects Pakistan, Azerbaijan

Ambassador for Azerbaijan Khazar Farhdov along with Chairman PIA Arshad Malik also traveled on the direct inaugural flight from Lahore to Baku

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: PIA commenced its flight operations to Baku, Azerbaijan from two major cities of Pakistan that are Lahore and Ka

rachi. The airline management under the guidance and leadership of CEO PIA, Air Marshal Arshad Malik is fulfilling the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan to foster and

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Shahbaz proposes govt minus PTI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly and PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif Wednesday floated the idea of forming a national government in which PTI has no participation. "The national government - sans PTI - should be formed for the next five years," the PML-N president said during an interview in a news channel programme. Mentioning that it was his personal idea of forming such a government, Shahbaz said that the

new leadership that comes into power should work with all the dedication so as to set a benchmark. With the National Assembly session for voting on the no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan just weeks away, the government is trying to woo its allies for supporting it during the voting. The Opposition is also attempting to cajole the PTI allies and seeking to break the government alliance in the lower house - by holding back-to-back meetings with them.

French envoy hosts Int'l day of Francophone event

ANSAR M BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey hosted a reception to celebrate the International Day Francophone event, at the French residence. Diplomats hailing from the French speaking countries attended the reception. Ambassador Galey delivered a short speech as well in which he welcomed the guests shed light on the importance of the day. It may be mentioned here that the Francophone area is made up of many countries. There are 300 million French speakers in 33 countries across the globe, a number that has increased by 9.6% since the last census in 2014. However, the Francophone area, as a political community, brings together 88 countries and associate, observer and member governments of the International Organisation of La Francophonie. French is the fifth most-spoken language in the world, behind Mandarin Chinese, English, Spanish and Arabic. The largest five Francophone countries population-wise are the Democratic Republic of the Congo, France, Algeria, Morocco and Côte d'Ivoire. French is the second most-used language in diplomacy. Multilateral Francophonie, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020, is an institutional



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France Nicolas Galey speaking at the International Francophone day event, at the French residence. - DNA

structure aiming to bring together Francophone countries in a political community. It organizes its relations between full member or associated States and Governments, which share a language, French, and motivated by the founding

principle of cooperation and solidarity, with the help of various actors: The OIF, which has 88 member and observer States and Governments; The four agencies working for La Francophonie: the University Agency for

Francophonie (AUF), TV5MONDE, the International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF) and Senghor University; The Parliamentary Assembly of La Francophonie (APF); The 16 institutional networks of La

Francophonie; The permanent ministerial conferences (CONFEJES, CONFEMEN); The Conference of INGOs of La Francophonie. This multilateral Francophonie contributes to peace, democracy, human rights, the promotion of the French language and cultural diversity as well as the development of shared and lasting prosperity. In 2018, at the Yerevan Summit, Louise Mushikiwabo was appointed as the new Secretary-General of La Francophonie. In her first speech, she stated her intention to place La Francophonie under the theme of living together, insisting that the OIF's action refocus on the areas "in which its added value is real, where its added value is recognized, where its action is expected", particularly the dissemination of the French language, defence of gender equality, development of digital technology and commitment to young people. For International Francophonie Day, on 20 March 2019, Emmanuel Macron visited OIF headquarters in Paris for the first time and met with Louise Mushikiwabo, reaffirming France's commitment to multilateral Francophonie. France is the leading contributor to the OIF and its agencies, which reflects how important La Francophonie is as a vehicle for our diplomacy.

Inside...

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NAB okays inquiries against misappropriation of funds - Page 04

Ukraine may force Mid East rivals to upgrade their toolkit - Page 05

Badosa keeps Indian Wells title defence on track - Page 06

64 dams out of 100 completed in Baluchistan - Page 07

Indonesia-Pakistan cultural festival celebrated at UAF - Page 08

Briefs

UAE royal delegation visits KP

PESHAWAR: A senior delegation led by Shiekh Abdulaziz Jamal Al Qasimi who is a member of the royal family of Sharjah UAE visited here on Wednesday. The visit is taking place as a follow-up of the Dubai Expo KP chapter held in January in which several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed.

Opp. parties would fail in 'vote of no confidence'

ABBOTTABAD: Speaker KP Assembly Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani Wednesday said that record development work has been carried out during the two tenures of the PTI government in Abbottabad, he said I challenge PML-N to show any one of their scheme for Abbottabad. Mushtaq Ghani expressed these views while addressing a rally organized for PTI nominated candidate for Tehsil Mayor Abbottabad Sardar Shujah Nabi. - APP

Palestinian envoy emphasizes media collaboration with Pak

Ahmed Ameen Rabaie, Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan urges AGAHI Awards to recognize human dignity to be the core value for Journalism

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: His Excellency Ahmed Ameen Rabaie, Ambassador of Palestine in Pakistan met the founders of AGAHI Awards, Purush Chaudhary and Amir Jahangir here in Islamabad today at the Embassy of the State of Palestine. Ambassador Rabaie shared his thoughts on the role of journalism in highlighting the importance of human values and dignity. He especially emphasized that Human Rights and Freedom are the fundamental rights of any citizens of the state.



informed the the founders that more than 50,000 Palestinian students have gained their higher education from Pakistan, the students received their specializations in the fields of medicine, engineering, linguistics, public policy, and arts etc.

He presented the traditional Palestinian keffiyeh and embroidered shawl along with the traditional key and flag to the founders. AGAHI Awards are focused on enhancing the collective consciousness of a society that enables professional ethics of objective

journalism, bolstered by social responsibility theory; and ethics to strengthen human values. "AGAHI Awards" are an annual series of journalism awards to build the appreciation mechanism for journalists in Pakistan. Inaugurated on March 28th, 2012, the AGAHI

Awards are an annual series of journalism awards in Pakistan. These are Pakistan's first ever journalism awards recognizing the best journalists across print, television, radio, and the internet. The Awards recognize more than 60 journalists on different thematic verticals. AGAHI and Mishal Pakistan organize these awards in collaboration with leading press clubs across the country, local and international media development bodies, regulatory authorities, and the private sector. AGAHI Awards have been the foremost media development initiative for media and journalism in the country. The awards have identified some of the most talented and diligent journalists in the industry. The winners have now acquired decision-making and leadership positions in the industry for "Shaping the Future of Journalism" in Pakistan. This year, the AGAHI Awards 2022 is creating new journalism beats and categories to make journalism in Pakistan more diverse and inclusive. The new categories will be included by critically analyzing media discourse for the past 12 months with an objective to create appreciation for the key challenges and opportunities reported by the media.

Excise police recover 266 kg hashish

PESHAWAR: The Excise police Peshawar region in a major operation foiled a bid to smuggle over 266 kilogram hashish at Kohat road here on Wednesday. - APP

Public Notice

This notice is given on behalf of my client Cyber Internet Services (Pvt) Limited, 10th floor Lakson Square, Building no. 3 Karachi, NTN No. 34-01-0660563-0 through Nazakat Hussain S/o Shah Muhammad Khan that the property Six (06) Marla (1632 Sq.Ft.) from khewat No. 699, Khatooni No. 1146-1148 and khewat No.696, Khatooni No. 1142-1145 located at main G.T Road, Mujahid Abad, Jhelum situated within the city area TMA Jhelum, owned by Mr. Fakhar Ul Alam S/o Muhammad Anwar R/o near Girls High School Jada District Jhelum, is being purchased by my client Cyber Internet Services (Pvt) LTD. Therefore, any person having any claim in respect of the above mentioned property or part thereof by way of sale, purchase, exchange, mortgage, gift, maintenance, inheritance, possession. Lease, tenancy, Sub tenancy, Lien, License, hypothecation, transfer of title or beneficial interest under any trust rights of prescription or pre-exemption or under any agreement or other disposition or under any decree order or awarded or otherwise claiming howsoever are hereby requested to make the same known in writing together with supporting document at my office at Jhelum courts within period of 07 days of publication here of failing which the claim of such person will deemed to have been waived or abandoned Ch Sohaib Haider Adv. High Court Cell No. 0314-5508200.

FPCCI delegation welcomes RCCI joining BMP group

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of FPCCI led by Chairman Irfan Iqbal Sheikh, Chairman Businessmen Panel & former President FPCCI Mian Anjum Nisar visited the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI). The Delegation includes FPCCI officials, Former president FPCCI Haji Ghulam Ali, Hina Mansab Khan Chairperson FPCCI Women Wing, Vice President Mohammad Nadeem Qureshi, Chief Coordinator, Mirza Abdul Rehman, Vice President Umar Masood ur Rehman, Mian

Muhammad Ali Former President Lahore Chamber and President Islamabad Small Chamber of Commerce and Industry Muhammad Zahid and Neelam Khalid and Uzma Shahid from Women Chamber Rawalpindi. President Nadeem Rauf, Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Senior Vice President Asim Malik, Vice President Talat Awan, Former Presidents Executive Members and Chamber Members were also present on the occasion. FPCCI Chairman Irfan Iqbal Sheikh and Chairman BMP Mian Anjum Nisar said that "We feel pride and honor that the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce joined the Businessmen Panel Group.

CM increases compensation amount of Peshawar tragedy

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: CM KP Mahmood has announced to increase the amount of special compensation for the heirs of martyrs of Kocha Risaldar tragedy from Rs. 2 million to Rs. 3 million each. He made this announcement while talking to a delegation of Imamia Jirga led by Brigadier (Retd) Sartaj Qazabash, General Secretary of Imamia Jirga Khyber Pakhtunkhwa who called on him here at Chief Minister House Peshawar on Wednesday. It may be recalled here that the provincial cabinet in its meeting held yesterday had approved special compensation of Rs. 2mn each for the heirs of the martyrs of

Kocha Risaldar incident. In the meeting, the delegates requested the Chief Minister to increase the amount of those special compensations, on which the CM announced to increase the amount of compensation from Rs. 2mn to Rs. 3mn per family. Special Assistant to CM for Information & Public Relations Barrister Ali Saif, Chief Secretary Dr. Shehzad Bangash, Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud and other relevant officials were also present on the Occasion. Later, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Information, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif while addressing a press conference with the leaders of Imamia Jirga, said that attack on Kocha Risaldar mosque was an attack on all the citizens of the country.

اسلام کے خلاف عدم برداشت اور ناپسندیدگی یعنی

اسلاموفوبیا کی روک تھام عالمی امن کی اولین ضرورت

A collage of news snippets and headlines in Urdu and English. Includes: 'Christchurch attack film slammed over white saviour narrative', 'Christchurch shooting: Gunman Tarrant wanted to kill as many as possible', 'Canada Truck Driver Kills Muslim Family Of 4 In Hate Attack: Police', and various religious and community news items.



حکومت پاکستان

وزیر اعظم پاکستان کی کوششوں سے، اسلاموفوبیا سے نمٹنے کی تاریخی قرار داد اقوام متحدہ سے منظور

National Days and Armed Forces Days

MARCH

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



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

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Bomb Disposal.....	15
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Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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Wajahat sets to achieve another feat for Pakistan

Wajahat Malik's mission is being sponsored by Serena Hotels, under its Adventure Diplomacy Initiative that aims at fostering adventure sports in the country and providing a supportive environment for the nation's talented sportspeople to flourish

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels on Tuesday announced the beginning of Expedition Indus, the first-ever exploratory river rafting expedition covering the entire length of the Indus River, starting from North to South, leading to the Arabian Sea. The Federal Minister and Adviser to Prime Minister of Pakistan for Climate Change, Mr. Malik Amin Aslam was the Chief Guest at the occasion. Wajahat Malik, an adventure, travel filmmaker has initiated this expedition which would be Pakistan's first ever full-length rafting expedition of the Indus River. At the send-off reception hosted by Serena Hotels, he announced his departure for the North of Pakistan in the third week of March 2022. The Indus is fed by mighty glaciers on the slopes of the Karakoram range, the Nanga Parbat massif, and the Kohistan highlands. Passing through rough terrain around the Northern and Western sides of the Nanga Parbat in gorges that reach depths of 17000 ft; the river contours around the KPK province then enters the plains of Punjab and finally culminates in the Arabian Sea. Wajahat Malik's mission is being sponsored by Serena Hotels, under its Adventure Diplomacy Initiative that aims at fostering adventure sports in the country and providing a supportive environment for the nation's talented sportspeople to flourish. Wajahat said: "Expedition Indus will be a landmark expedition not only in terms of natural conservation, but also in identifying sustainable tourism sites along the path of the river. I am truly



ISLAMABAD: SAPM Malik Amin Aslam, Additional Secretary Ministry of Climate Change Joadat Ayaz, CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani and other posing for a picture during a send-off reception for Wajahat Malik who is undertaking river expedition. – DNA

grateful to Serena Hotels for supporting this unique initiative." Mr. Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels said: "We at Serena have always been a passionate advocate for adventure

sport, testing human endurance and commitment. Supporting brave adventurers like Samina Baig, Sirbaz Khan and now Wajahat Malik, we are encouraged to further strengthen our Adventure Diplomacy Initiative." The Chief

Guest Mr. Malik Amin Aslam said: "I congratulate Wajahat and his team for the remarkable idea and journey they will be embarking upon. This year the

Government will be initiating 'Living Rivers' to study the history and mapping the health of the river and life around it, hence this expedition will play a vital role in documenting the Indus".

Shan Shares, Ismail Foundation join hands

ISLAMABAD: In its commitment to promote green and healthy communities, Shan Shares, the CSR identity of Shan Foods, has partnered with Ismail Foundation, an independent, not-for-profit organization founded as an extension of Ismail Industries Limited, to construct and maintain a park under the Foundation's WASL project (Water and Sanitation Logistics). WASL is a social impact project of Ismail Foundation which aims to provide access to safe, low-cost, and high-quality drinking water to all through its state-of-the-art water containers and RO plant. Under this

partnership, Shan Shares will sponsor WASL for the construction of a recreational park in the area surrounding the plant. This initiative will not only help support the clean water project but also uplift the quality of living of the residents by providing them with cleaner air to breathe and bringing positive changes to their health and wellbeing. Maria Rashdi, Head of Corporate communication & PR at Shan Foods, sharing her views on the initiative said, "Through this partnership, we hope to promote the preservation of the environment and encourage

a healthy lifestyle among people. At Shan Foods, we believe that it is our responsibility to nurture and protect the environment we are a part of." Arif Hussain Noman, Head of HR at Ismail Industries, while commenting on the partnership, said, "Conservation of natural resources, especially water, is the core objective behind the WASL project. As a corporation ourselves, we recognize the impact such initiatives from corporate sector carry. We appreciate Shan Shares' contribution to our cause and hope to keep playing our part for the betterment of our environment." – DNA

Freedom of expression situation in IOK worsens

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a webinar hosted by Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) in collaboration with World Muslim Congress (WMC) have voiced grave concerns over the criminalization of dissent by Modi's racist regime in the Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The webinar titled "Criminalization of freedom of expression in IOK" was held on the sidelines of 49th session of the UNHRC. Panelists hailing from different parts of the world including Ms. Mary Scully, Robert Fantina author and journalist, Barrister Tanvir Munim, Sheni Hamid, Advocate Nasir Qadri, Ms Naila Altaf Kiyani, Prof. Dr. Shuguftha Ashraf, and others, said a press release here on Wednesday. Whereas the event was moderated by the KIIR Chairman Altaf Hussain

Wani. In his initial remarks, the KIIR chief said that the right to freedom of peaceful expression was a fundamental human right of every human being. He said that this inalienable right has been enshrined in article 19 of the UN human rights bill. Along with freedom of expression, Wani said that a raft of other international treaties guarantees the right to freedom of peaceful assembly, freedom of right to expression, and opinion. These fundamental freedoms he said were central for living in an open and free society, in which people can access justice and other judicial remedies. Defending these rights, he said, have been a core part of the HR organizations. "Ironically, in today's Kashmir these essential freedoms remain largely suspended and virtually non-existent", he said. – APP

Covid claims 2 more lives, 12 new infections

RAWALPINDI, Mar 16 (APP): As many as 12 more people were tested positive for fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 46,418 in the Rawalpindi district, while two persons had lost their battle of life against the deadly disease. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Wednesday, among the new patients, three belonged to the Rawal town, two from Rawalpindi Cantonment, Potohar town and Taxila, while one of each case has arrived from Gujjar Khan, Khanewal and Abbottabad. – APP

Tree Plantation Drive kicks off at AIOU Islamabad



ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has launched a spring tree plantation drive. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, inaugurated the campaign by planting an apricot tree on

university premises. Rector, Fast National University, Dr. Aftab Ahmad was the chief guest. All deans, registrar, principal officers and faculty members also participated in this national cause. VC, AIOU,

Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum said that credit for providing a pleasant environment to the students, decorating the university with flowers and plants goes to the gardeners of AIOU. He added, planting a tree is a noble cause and everybody should plant a tree for a better and healthy future for our coming generation. He directed DG Regional Services to start a plantation drive on all regional campuses of AIOU. Rector Fast National University, Dr. Aftab Ahmad said that planting is a need of our country and Open University is playing a vital role make Pakistan green. It is pertinent to mention here that AIOU was ranked in top 500 world greenest campuses in 2021. Chairman, Department of Agricultural Sciences, Prof. Dr. Sher Muhammad while briefing the Vice Chancellor on the plantation drive said that last year university had planted approximately 1600 different types of plants whereas today 750 plants are being planted including plum, pear, apricot, peach, lemon and orange. All the departmental heads and principal officers participated in the planting of trees.

Gill responds to Maryam's statement



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Political Communications Dr. Shahbaz Gill on Wednesday while referring to the PML-N said people who all their lives have been involved in immoral politics were teaching ethics to others. Responding to PML-N leader Maryam Aurangzeb's statement, he said PML-N and PPP leaders Nawaz Sharif and Asif Ali Zardari were far from the standards of morality. "A b - scounders were teaching others the respect for law", he added. Gill referring to PML-N, he said those who used government helicopters for personal use were telling others on how to use the government resources. "The incompetent league (PML-N) used govt resources to expand its personal businesses. – DNA

OGRA engage oil stakeholders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) conducted a meeting at its Regional Office Lahore with leading Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and Oil Marketing Association of Pakistan (OMAP), which was chaired by Mr. Zain-ul-Abideen Qureshi, Member (Oil), OGRA, Senior ED (Oil) and other key officers were also present. All issues including current scenario relating to PDC, IFEM matters, Industry reservations on certain matters, oil industry suggestions/proposals aimed at protecting national interest.

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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

Briefs

Lok Virsa museums to remain closed for four days

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (NIFTH) Wednesday announced that 'Lok Virsa Museums' will remain closed on March 16, 18, 20, 23 on account of preparations for Pakistan Day parade. According to statement issued here, the museums will reopen on March 23 at 1500 hours after parade, heritage Museum, also known as Lok Virsa Museum is a museum administered and managed by Lok Virsa - National Institute of Folk & Traditional Heritage. Due to preparations regarding Pakistan Day parade taking place at Parade Ground near Lok Virsa premises, the Pakistan National Museum of Ethnology (Heritage Museum) and Pakistan Monument Museum (PMM) will remain closed as per previous practice. - APP

Pakistan earns \$1486 mln from IT services' export

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$1,486.890 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the first seven months of financial year 2021-22. This shows growth of 32.63 percent as compared to US \$1,121.105 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year 2020-21, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During July-January (2021-22), the export of computer services grew by 42.27 percent as it surged from US \$890.065 million last fiscal year to US \$1,190.600 million this year. Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 44.61 percent, from US \$297.560 million to US \$430.309 million while the exports of hardware consultancy services also rose by 284.42 percent from US \$0.353 million to US \$1.357 million. The export and import of computer software related services also rose by 42.27 percent, from US \$218.898 million to US \$311.431 million whereas the exports of repair and maintenance services surge to \$0.770 million from \$0.299 million. In addition, the exports of other computer services increased by 19.78 percent going up from US\$ 372.955 million to US \$446.733 million. Meanwhile, the export of information services during the period under review increased by 29.05 percent by going up from US \$2.410 million to US \$3.110 million. Among the information services, the exports of news agency services increased by 61.57 percent, from US \$ 1.270 million to US \$2.052 million whereas the exports of other information services however decreased by 7.19 percent, from US \$1.140 million to US \$1.058 million. - APP

IHC declares LG Ord as void

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday terminated the Local Government Ordinance 2021 while declaring it as null and void. Justice Mohsin Akhter Kayani announced the verdict which was reserved previously after listening arguments from all respondents. The petitions were filed by the Capital Development Authority (CDA)'s Mazdoor Union, Officers Association and ex-chairman of UC Sardar Mehtab challenging the ordinance. The court stopped the local body elections in Islamabad and said that it couldn't be conducted under this ordinance. The court instructed the authority to convene the elections under Local Government Act 2015. It may be mentioned here that the petitioners had challenged the ordinance in presence of the LG act. The lawyers had adopted the stance that the Parliament's session was prorogued on November 19, while the ordinance was issued on November 23. The petitioners had also objected over limiting the role of chairman through the new law. - APP

NAB okays inquiries against misappropriation of funds

Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB said that NAB's faith is corruption free Pakistan. NAB is pursuing a policy of accountability for all in accordance with the law

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) Executive Board Meeting was held at NAB Headquarters on Wednesday which was chaired by Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chairman NAB, Zahir Shah, Prosecutor General Accountability, Syed Asghar Haider, Director General HQ, Hasnain Ahmed, Director General Rawalpindi, IrfanMangi, DG Operations Masood Alam Khan and other senior officers attended the meeting. It is a yearlong policy of the NAB to share the details of EBM with the public which does not aim to hurt anyone as all inquiries and investigations are initiated on the basis of alleged allegations, which are not final. NAB, a people friendly institute, decides to go ahead with the case after assessing the merits of the cases and after knowing the flip side of the coin. The Executive Board Meeting of the National Accountability Bureau authorised conducting 11 inquiries. The EBM authorised conducting inquiries against various personalities included Messers ACE Group (ACE marketing group, Pvt, Ltd), ACE,



Builders, Pvt, Ltd and others, management of Utility Store Corporation, Officers, officials and others of Punjab Cooperative Board of Liquidation, Anjum Pervaiz, former Senior General Manager, Pakistan Railways and others, Officers/officials of Ministry of Housing and Works, Officers/officials and others of State office, owners, sponsors of Shaikat Marvat Group of Companies, officers, officials and others of Forest department, Javed Memon, Chief Engineer, Irrigation Department, Larkana and others, Professor Ghulam Asghar Channa, Vice Chancellor and others of Shaheed Benazir

Bhutto Medical University, Larkana, Engineer Sardar ALI Shah, Project Director of Right Bank Outfall Drain, Hyderabad circle and others and inquiry was also authorised against Pritam Das, superintending engineer, Irrigation department, Govt of Sindh, Ali Muhammad, Contractor, AMB and Company, Pvt, Limited and others. NAB-EBM also authorised conducting 2 investigations against various personalities including Ghulam Haider Jamali, Former Inspector General, Police, Sindh, Karachi and others, officers/ officials of District Director, Agriculture, department, D.I Khan and others.

The Executive Board Meeting of NAB Okayed sending the complaint against Adam Khan Automobiles Pvt. Ltd. and others to IG Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for legal action. The Executive Board Meeting of NAB authorised the closure of inquiries against CDA officers / officials and others and Mohammad Omar Work, former Superintendent of Police, in accordance with the law. Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman National Accountability Bureau said that NAB's faith is corruption free Pakistan. NAB is pursuing a policy of accountability for all in accordance with the law. He said that mega corruption cases against big fish especially money laundering, fake accounts, assets in excess of income, illegal housing societies and the accused in the Mudaraba scandal should be brought to a logical conclusion in accordance with the law. He said that over the last four years, the esteemed accountability courts have not only convicted 1405 accused but also recovered Rs. 584 billion directly and indirectly from corrupt elements in the last four years which is a record success. He said that NAB is a national anti-corruption body. He said that NAB always believes in performing its duties in accordance with the constitution and law.

PAC organizes folk musical night on Punjab Culture Day



DNA

RAWALPINDI: Folk Musical Night was organized at Punjab Arts Council on the occasion of Culture Day. Member Provincial Assembly Simabia Tahir and Farah Agha were the special guests of the musical night. Famous comedian Saeed Anwar performed the duties of compare in the ceremony. Famous folk singer Afshan

Zebi performed well in the musical night and entertained the audience, while other folk singers are Maria Kanwal, Akhtar Ali Khan, Saghar Abbas. While addressing the function Member Punjab Assembly Seemabia Tahir said that Punjab is second to none in folk music. Punjabi folk music has famous folk tales like Mirza Sahibs, Sasi Pinnu, Heer Ranjha, Sohni Mahiwal and Raja Rasalu. Member

Punjab Assembly Farah Agha said that Punjab arts council did a great job on organizing folk music night on Culture Day eve. Chief Minister is working day and night for the promotion of arts and culture in Punjab province. Naheed Mantoor said that the purpose of Culture Day is to restore the lost culture of Punjab in its original form. A folk festival, folk music is the identity of Punjab.

Arts Council has always been holding events to promote culture. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that Punjab is a rich province in terms of cultural heritage. Government of the Punjab has taken the initiative to spread Punjabi culture all over the world. In the end, he also congratulated all the folk singers on their brilliant performances. A large number of citizens participated in the folk night.

PNCA arranges spring festival 'Nowruz' celebrations

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with Burushaski Research Academy would arrange a grand spring festival 'Nowruz Celebrations' on Thursday (March 17) aiming to showcase culture and traditional heritage of the provinces. Talking to APP, official of PNCA Masroor Ali Shah said, "The show would include music and dance performances by artists of Gilgit-Baltistan." Masroor informed that Nowruz is the occasion for traditional cultural activities, combining common practices with local customs. Adding he said Poetry is a popular feature of Nowruz celebrations, with 'Nowruz poems' being written, published and recited around the time of the festival.



He said music is also very important, and many of the countries that celebrate Nowruz have their own traditional folk songs specifically for the festival. Nowruz songs would be performed by traditional singers and story tellers, he added. Masroor further briefed about the history of Nowruz celebrations that millions of people around the world have celebrated Nowruz - a festival that marks the Persian New Year and the official beginning of spring. Nowruz begins at the spring equinox, when the sun crosses the equator and day and night are equal length. On this day, families spend time outside at a park or in the countryside and have a festive picnic. The day is all about being outside in nature and enjoying spring. It's a month long celebration, filled with parties, craft-making, street performances and public rituals, he said. Nowruz promotes values of peace and solidarity between generations and within families, he added. - APP

Cultural organizations arranges activities to mark Pakistan Day

Colorful puppets will portray the history of Pakistan Day in the form of stories to grab the attention of the children and educate them about their history

ISLAMABAD: Cultural organizations including the Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA), Pakistan Academy of Letters, National Book Foundation, National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) were all set to hold various events and activities in connection with Pakistan Day. Talking to APP, an official of PNCA Masroor Shah said, "Exhibitions, cultural show, patriotic songs competitions, Tableaus, skits, and folk dances will be presented as a part of the cultural show at PNCA". Colorful puppets will portray the history of Pakistan Day in the form of stories to grab the attention of the children and educate them about their history. Besides depicting the culture and traditions of the country, such shows also educate the youth regarding the struggle of freedom fighters through soft expressions of art, said a PNCA official. Lok Virsa would organize Patriotic songs performance on Pakistan Day special cake cutting ceremony will take place at the premises. While private art galleries, educational institutions, and performing art institutions will also arrange a variety of programs to celebrate the day in a befitting manner. From grand cultural shows to art, speech, and songs competition, the programs will focus on serving informative entertainment to people through a visual narration of historical moments and the struggle of freedom fighters, said an official of Lok Virsa Raza Saeed. - APP

FJWU to hold Naqsh Digital Film Festival

ISLAMABAD: Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) in collaboration with RIME Digital organized "Naqsh Digital Film Festival" (NDF) said that G-10 Markaz was one of the old commercial centres of Islamabad but was facing multiple issues due to ignorance and urged that CDA should focus on better development of this commercial centre and address key issues of its trade to facilitate the growth of trade activities. He said this while addressing a delegation of Traders Welfare Association, G-10 Markaz, Islamabad that visited ICCI led by its President Muhammad Abid Abbasi. TWA G-10 Markaz Senior Vice President Tabish Mehboob, Vice President Jawad Kiani, Secretary General Azhar Amin and others were in the delegation. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that he was visiting various markets along with CDA Chairman Amir Ali Ahmed to

CDA asked to address key issues of G-10 Markaz on priority

address their issues and reiterated that he would try to visit G-10 Markaz along with Chairman CDA as soon as possible to identify problems for their early resolution. He assured that ICCI would cooperate with TWA G-10 Markaz in its endeavours for addressing the issues of traders. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Chairman Founder Group said that ICCI was trying to resolve key issues of all markets to facilitate the growth of trade activities. He said that TWA G-10 Markaz should send written issues to ICCI so that they could be taken up with relevant departments for redress. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI urged that CDA should ensure timely completion of development works in all markets including G-10 Markaz. They demanded that a food

street or flower market should be established in G-10 Markaz to accelerate the business activities. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Abid Abbasi, President, Traders Welfare Association G-10 Markaz said that vending carts have been placed in front of shops in G-10 Markaz under Ehsas Rehri Baan program due to which the business of shopkeepers was badly suffering. He demanded that all vending carts should be shifted out of G-10 Markaz to an open space to save the business of traders. He said that traders have many concerns on the POS system and urged that FBR should address their concerns. He said that Islamabad High Court should issue instructions for implementation of new rent control act in courts and old rent disputes should also be decided under the new rent law. - DNA

Alvi urges workplace culture based on ethics

President Alvi said morality-based order, may it be at the level of countries or an organization, needed to be guided by the principles of compassion and ethics

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Wednesday called for promoting business practices based on transparency and ethics at the organizational and corporate level to contribute towards the development of the country. The president also emphasized creating an inclusive culture at the workplace by accommodating disabled persons who fulfilled the required skillset for the job. Speaking at a discussion themed 'Ethics and business', the president said establishing an accountable workplace culture by maintaining the highest standards of morality could lead to good corporate governance. The event organized by Telenor

Pakistan at its Campus 345 focused on the importance of transparent and anti-corruption corporate policies aimed at building a prosperous Pakistan. President Alvi said morality-based order, may it be at the level of countries or an organization,

needed to be guided by the principles of compassion and ethics. "We want Pakistan to become a strong nation with a society that promotes the culture of transparency and morality," he said. He emphasized consistent self-judgment of all shareholders

in an organization and the formulation of policies by the corporate leaders that upheld the values of integrity. He mentioned the challenges in a corporate sector including workplace competition for power, money, and status, adding that adhering to a robust ethical

code of conduct could strengthen the core of any organization. In this regard, President Alvi termed maintaining discipline, safety procedures, environment consciousness, the interest of employees, and balancing with the market were the important factors. CEO Telenor Pakistan Irfan Wahab Khan said with 17 years of its presence in Pakistan, the Norway-based Telenor was committed to serving the country by proactively implementing the transparent and corruption-free business culture. He said the public and private sector in Pakistan needed to explore the concept of ESG - environment, social, and governance in order to create a welcoming environment for investment.



Islamabad beautification in full swing

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Wednesday said the beautification of the federal capital was in full swing as the country was hosting 48th OIC Council of Foreign Ministers meeting on March 22-23. Special teams were in the field to give city a festive look on the arrival of guests, an official of the authority told APP. Similarly, teams were constituted to ensure cleanliness and sanitation across the city especially at the venue and on the route, he added. He said the environment wing was directed to decorate the median strips, green belts with attractive landscaping to enhance its green cover and beauty. He said the authority was renovating the Parliament on request of the National Assembly, adding that the doors were removed temporarily to install new tiles, while over 40 washrooms in the Parliament House were also being renovated. The carpet in the National Assembly Hall was replaced after 30 years. OIC is the second major international organisation after the United Nations with 57 members from Islamic countries. It was established in 1969 as the collective voice of the Islamic world and a guarantee to protect and defend their interests. The meeting of the OIC foreign ministers is held every year. The 47th meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Islamic countries was hosted by Niger in the city of Niamey in November 2020. Islamabad hosted the 34th meeting in May 2007. - APP

Snatchers gang held; valuables recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Sabzi Mandi police have arrested seven accused of a snatchers gang and recovered valuables. IGP Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas had categorically ordered all zonal officers for massive crackdown against criminal elements and to protect the lives and property of the citizens, said a police spokesman on Wednesday. According to the details, a police team of Sabzi Mandi police station under supervision of SP Industrial Area Saud Khan headed by SHO Sabzi Mandi Ishfaq Hussain Shah along with other officials apprehended a snatchers gang. The accused were identified as Bilal Ahmad, Ehtasham alias choondi, Shah Sawar, Ayaz alias cheena, Jawad, Esa and Dost. Police team has also recovered snatched cash worth Rs. 50,000, 07 mobile phones, 04 motorbikes, 04 pistols with ammunition and daggers. During preliminary investigation the accused have confessed their involvement in numerous cases of snatching in areas of PS Tarnol, Industrial Area, Shamas Colong and different areas of Rawalpindi. IGP Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas has appreciated the performance of police team and further directed all zonal SPs to intensify the security in their respective areas. "Safety and security of the citizens is our prime responsibility and no laxity would be tolerated in this regard" he added. - APP

ANF seizes over 5 kg drugs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) taking action on an intelligence report conducted a raid at Jhelum and recovered 5 kilograms drugs besides arresting accused. According to a spokesman of the Anti Narcotics Force Headquarters Rawalpindi, the drugs were recovered after a search of a Suzuki Mehran near Turki Toll Plaza. The drugs seized included 3kg and 750 grams hashish and 1kg and 250 grams opium. During the operation, Rawalpindi resident Abdul Shakoor and his wife Kanwal Mahmood were arrested on the spot. A case has been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation was underway.

Elahi's statement causes ripples

PMLQ leader and Speaker of the Punjab Assembly Ch. Pervez Elahi's statement about their future relations with the government has caused ripples especially among the PTI ranks for nobody was expecting from PMLQ leadership to issue such a statement. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan is in trouble as opposition parties have almost decided to support the no-trust move. In a recent statement Ch. Pervez Elahi said all opposition parties offered us something except the govt and Imran Khan.

He added, now it seems that the prime minister has missed the train. He said they have almost decided their future course of action. They are only waiting for the MQM to make its mind. He said MQM had some differences with Asif Zardari. 70 per cent of the differences have been addressed. He added, in case we reach an agreement, Asif Zardari shall be our grantor.

But interestingly the very next day Ch. Pervez Elahi had to sort of retract his statement saying they were still part of the govt alliance and had not joined the opposition forces. The statement came soon after Defence Minister Pervez Khattak's tirade against the PMLQ leadership in which he accused them of using blackmailing tactics to get the Punjab chief minister slot.

Another govt partner MQM has its own demands. It wants all its offices de sealed in Karachi. In addition, it also wants a due share in the Sindh government in case it join hands with the opposition parties. Another king maker in the given circumstances happens to be the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), that too is negotiating its terms of conditions with the opposition parties in order to be the part of the anti-govt alliance. The PMLQ, BAP and MQM are generally considered as the pro-establishment parties and will switch over to either govt or opposition alliances after getting nod from the establishment.

The Prime Minister must be spending sleepless nights these days as he has hitherto failed to secure a clear support even from his allied parties. A state of uncertainty continues to grip the country. The economic woes are multiplying. Price hike is taking a heavy toll on people. Stock exchange continues its downward slide thus badly shaking the confidence of the investors. It is still unclear as to how the new government will cope with the deteriorating economic situation because so far we have not heard anything from them.

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CIA torture

TWENTY years ago, in the wake of the September 11 terror attacks, the CIA established an international torture programme "rendering" people to secret detention facilities around the world. The full horror of what took place in these black sites is still emerging. We already know of mock executions and sexual violence; of a detainee waterboarded 83 times in a month; of a man dying during an interrogation and another of hypothermia after being left almost naked on a bare concrete floor – on top of the regular use of pain, humiliation and sleep deprivation. This week, we learned that Ammar al-Baluchi suffered brain damage when he was repeatedly slammed against a plywood wall by trainee interrogators using him as a teaching prop. They queued up to hit his head so that the instructor "could certify them on their ability to use the technique".

The details emerged in a damning report written by the CIA's own inspector general in 2008, but only now released following a court filing. The "war on terror" became an end that was used to justify any means – but never openly. Torture was rebranded as "enhanced interrogation techniques". Interrogators sought assurances that a detainee would "remain in isolation and incommunicado for the remainder of his life" before they started work. The programme was pointless as well as brutal. The inspector general noted that the detainee lied to make the torture stop – in line with the 2014 Senate intelligence committee report that found that interrogations frequently produced false testimony (while non-coercive methods elicited useful information). At least 26 of 119 detainees were wrongly held in the first place.

Mr Baluchi now faces the death penalty as one of five men at Guantanamo Bay charged with participation in the September 11 plot. The case has been in pre-trial hearings for 10 years, largely due to disputes over the admissibility of testimony obtained after torture. Last week, another Guantanamo detainee – Mohammad Ahmad al-Qahtani, who was suspected of planning to join the plot – was repatriated to Saudi Arabia for mental health treatment. The US dropped plans to try him after concluding he had been tortured at the facility.

This is not only about an injustice to individuals. The rapporteur suggests that the refusal to acknowledge what happened has helped create an environment in which there appears to be impunity for states conducting mass secret detention. An honest reckoning would help to debunk the dangerous myth that torture works and claims that national security requires unfettered powers used in secrecy. It is an essential part of ensuring such crimes are not committed again.

Ukraine may force Mid East rivals to upgrade their toolkit

James Doresy

Turkey and Israel have so far been able to package their hedge by exploiting their close ties to both Russia and Ukraine to play the role of mediator even if mediation at this stage of the war has little if any chance of success

STRUGGLING to remain on the sidelines of the 21st century's watershed war in Ukraine, Middle Eastern nations are discovering that they may be fighting their battles with an outdated toolkit.

As a result, the Ukraine war could saw off the legs from under the table of Middle Eastern détente that already are built on shaky ground. For the past 18 months, Middle Eastern rivals – Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Turkey, Iran, and Israel – have sought to hedge their bets by diversifying their relationships with major powers, the United States, China, and/or Russia.

Increasingly, the rivals are finding out that the Ukraine conflict threatens to narrow their ability to hedge. The conflict has, irrespective of the outcome of the war, reduced not only big power competition to a two- rather than three-horse race but also opened the door to a Cold War-style international relations based on the principle of 'you are with us or against us.' Even if portraying the Ukraine conflict as a showdown in a titanic battle between democracy and autocracy may be misleading and/or overstated, it does not distract from the fact that the war has shaken, if not undermined, a major pillar of autocracy, Russia.

Even so, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel may privately welcome potential Russian sabotage of negotiations in Vienna to revive the

2015 Iranian nuclear agreement, given that they view it as deeply flawed. Middle Eastern states may also find that the sabotage is one of Moscow's last hurrahs as it is hit by harsh Western sanctions and drawn into what is likely to be an all-consuming quagmire. As fears grew of a Russian monkey wrench, Iranian Spiritual Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei defended Iran's support of militias in various Arab countries, including the Houthis in Yemen who have been firing missiles and drones at targets in the two countries. On Thursday, a Houthi drone attacked a refinery in Riyadh, causing a small fire.

"Our presence in regional issues is our strategic depth... (It's) a means of power," Mr. Khamenei told Iran's Council of Experts that includes the country's most powerful clerics. Turkey and Israel have so far been able to package their hedge by exploiting their close ties to both Russia and Ukraine to play the role of mediator even if mediation at this stage of the war has little if any chance of success.

By contrast, Saudi Arabia and the UAE find themselves far more exposed and in the ironic position of sharing a boat with their nemeses, Iran and its Lebanese ally, Hezbollah, as they maneuver in a geopolitical minefield. Like the conservative Gulf states, Iran too has sought to remain on the sidelines of the Ukraine conflict. More fundamentally, the conflict could upset the house of cards on which Middle Eastern détente is built. The driving principle of that détente is to kick the can down the road on significant disagreements over issues, including political Islam and Palestine in favour of closer economic, and in the case of Israel, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and potentially Qatar, closer security cooperation.

This week, Israel Defense Forces chief Aviv Kohavi reportedly discussed military cooperation with his Qatari counterpart, Salem bin Hamad bin Mohammed bin Aqeel Al-Nabi, during an official visit to Bahrain. Unlike Bahrain and the UAE, Qatar has refused to formalize its informal relations with Israel as long as there is no settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Russian invasion of Ukraine resonates among the Gulf's smaller states, three of which know first-hand what bullying by larger neighbours in violation of international law means.

Iran has occupied three Emirati islands in the Gulf since 1971. Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 while fears of a military intervention accompanied a 3.5 year-long Saudi-UAE-led economic and diplomatic boycott of Qatar.

This week, Washington Post columnist Farid Zakaria argued that the Ukraine conflict has ushered in a new era "marked by the triumph of politics over economics. For the past three decades, most countries have acted with one lodestar in mind: economic growth. They have embraced trade, technology, and domestic reforms, all to produce more growth. Those kinds of choices are possible in an atmosphere in which one does not have to worry that much about the core issue of national security."

Emirati officials insisted that the two statements were not contradictory. They said the UAE favoured a production increase but was bound by OPEC+ agreements. OPEC+ is scheduled to meet on March 31. The manoeuvre was partly an Emirati effort to cover the country's flank and partly a demonstration of the UAE's ability to help reduce prices. Oil prices dropped 13 per cent after Mr. Al-Otaiba's remarks. The influx of Russians looking for places to safely park their money and assets; leaks about real estate holding of oligarchs in Dubai, including ones belonging to now sanctioned individuals; stepped-up private aircraft traffic between Moscow and Dubai, and the sighting of Russian-owned superyachts off the UAE coast could not come at a worse time. Earlier this month, the Financial Action Task Force, a Paris-based international anti-money laundering and anti-terrorism finance watchdog, grey listed the UAE for lagging in identifying illicit funds flowing into the country. The listing that groups the UAE alongside 22 others, including Pakistan, Syria, South Sudan, Yemen, and Myanmar, dealt a blow to the country's image as a go-to global financial hub "What separates Dubai from other traditional havens for dirty money is the amazing secrecy. As a fugitive in Dubai, you can snatch up property, stash your yachts and set up bank accounts with very few obstacles. It's also one of the few autocracies that's a destination – rather than a transit location – for illicit flows," said Jodi Vittori, who co-authored a study of Dubai's financial flows.

HANAMI – A Philosophical celebration

Dr. Nusrat Majeed



Hanami and Sakura are a major cultural phenomenon throughout the country and heralds the arrival of spring. Boughs upon Boughs of cherry blossoms decorate the sky in pale pink, their delicate silhouette no larger than a thumb. Beneath this sea of flowers is the huge sea of plastic mats on which the visitors sit, ear and enjoy. The delicate cherry blossom trees bloom and from the very first pop of colour to the last fallen petal, the people celebrate Hanami. The full bloom of cherry blossoms happens from late March to early April

GLOOMY partial lockdown in beautiful spring makes me nostalgic about my stay in Japan and the lovely Spring seasons that I enjoyed in different parts of the country. The first spring was experienced during my cardiology training in Tokushima University. What took me there is a frequently asked question. It dates back to my studies in Mc Master's University in Canada and then Mayo clinic Minnesota in the US, where I had gone for my post graduate training, after graduating from King Edwards medical college in Lahore. At both these prestigious universities I was thoroughly impressed by original work and the research by the Japanese cardiologists, so I decided to go to Japan to have first-hand experience. It was not easy but I was bent upon visiting Japan and finally landed at Tokushima airport on the 20th of March 1992. I was greeted very warmly by the Dean and the professorial staff of Cardiology department. It was a new world all together, homogeneity of society, very rich culture and above all; THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS were out of this world. My university was in Shikoku prefecture (prov-

ince). It is famous for its towering mountains in the middle of island and has its share of natural marvels and attractions not be missed. Like our twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Tokushima too has a twin city Naruto, a place famous for whirlpools, as a matter of fact it is among the world's top three whirlpools.

In between sky and the whirlpools is Naruto bridge, a beautiful piece of architecture—simply awe-inspiring Shikoku's history can be traced all the way back to the era, when Buddhism was first introduced to Japan from China, so this prefecture is full of ancient, historical temples and shrines and has breath taking scenery [only in Tokushima there are 86 temples and shrines] Now coming back to Spring — In Japan it is synonymous with Sakura [cherry blossom] and Hanami, it literally translates to flower (hana) viewing (mi) It is much more than just admiring flowers, though it is a celebration of newness but it is also transience.

Hanami and Sakura are a major cultural phenomenon throughout the country and heralds the arrival of spring. Boughs upon Boughs of cherry blossoms decorate the sky in pale pink, their delicate silhouette no larger than a thumb. Beneath this sea of flowers is the huge sea of plastic mats on which the visitors sit, ear and enjoy. The delicate cherry blossom trees bloom and from the very first pop of colour to the last fallen petal, the people celebrate Hanami. The full bloom of cherry blossoms happens from late March to early April. It is also a season of many changes in Japan including graduations and entrance ceremonies to school, so there are many reasons to celebrate. Academic and fiscal year also starts from 1st April. This fleeting beauty of Japan is renowned all over the world. On the 3rd day of my arrival, my department planned a Hanami trip at mount BIZAN, it is called so because it is shaped like an eye brow. It was an unforgettable experience!

People from all walks of life including women, children and the elderly come out in these beautiful gardens. They eat and drink while basking under the flowers. Appreciation of nature aside, HANAMI is where everyone from salary man to tourists can meet and greet, with the sole purpose of having a good time. It has been an experience so uniquely Japanese for centuries. Sakura has been an integral part of culture from music and performing arts to handicrafts and cuisine. This sense of appreciating nature —petals falling on the ground along with change in people's lives, the delightfulness and gentle excitement of it all —is closely connected with the perishing of the moment indicating into brevity of life.

This is a deep philosophy of the Japanese culture which is reserved, humble and formal.

No-trust motion and political uncertainty in Pakistan

Mustansar Siam



Vietnam is interesting in this context by considering its journey from a promising economy to distress. And this transition was the result of prolonged political unrest

RECENT developments in Pakistan's polity have shown that the country's opposition parties have a consensus to oust Prime Minister Imran Khan from his office. Political parties with the least seats in National Assembly are claiming a more detrimental role. PDM Head, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, claims that PDM is trying to save Pakistan from

an inevitable disaster. Federal Ministers frequently appear on the different TV channels and assert that opposition would be unsuccessful in bringing 172 members into the National Assembly. However, there are some fundamental reasons to believe that this political onslaught and uncertainty would harm the country's democracy, economy, institutional development, and foreign policy.

Firstly, focusing on democracy and institutional development, one needs to be understood that democracy has to do more with political stability and institutions. Pakistan has spent more than 65 years in uncertainty & instability where governments came and gone in a disorganized way. No single Prime Minister could ever complete its term. This uncertainty, undoubtedly, hampers the working of Prime Ministers and the institutions within the country. Because when a public office holder is unsure about its term, he would always keep relying on some forces that help him be in power. Institutions also needed a certain amount of time to evolve and appear more substantial. Changing regimes and uncertainties do affect them. They do affect their delivery more practically. Ranmal Abeyasinghe has exemplified the relationship of democracy with sustainability and political development. The author has argued that political stability leads to institutional development

and this relationship is quite interesting. Additionally, such political uncertainties and asymmetry between political forces have immense impacts on the country's foreign policy and economy. Whenever there are political upheavals, the country's economy becomes more vulnerable. Zahid Hussain has noted that political stability and economy are deeply interconnected. He has argued that political unrest reduces investment and pace on the one hand and increases competition among different organs of the government on the other. The example of Vietnam is interesting in this context by considering its journey from a promising economy to distress. And this transition was the result of prolonged political unrest. PMIK's performance can be evaluated at multiple stages. One can criticize the current government for its inefficiency or failure in sustaining the economy. But a careful examination is needed before reaching a conclusion about the factors which destabilize a country's political and economic fabric. Such political uncertainties frequently pave the way for civilian and non-civilian elites to come, intervene and claim their political space. When a country's political system is stable and governments are completing its terms, it gives much-needed strength and power to the institutions of that specific country. It invites foreign investors to come and invest.

Briefs

Barcelona
eye Europa
League
quarters

PARIS: Barcelona and tournament specialists Sevilla are hoping to secure spots in the quarter-finals of the Europa League this week with three Spanish teams still in a competition dominated by La Liga clubs in recent years. A rejuvenated Barca head to Istanbul for the second leg of their last-16 tie against Galatasaray on a 10-game unbeaten run that has propelled them back up to third in La Liga and seen them emerge as one of the favourites to win the Europa League. "The fans are enjoying themselves when they come to the stadium, and so are we out on the pitch," said Gerard Pique, who played his 600th game for Barcelona in Sunday's 4-0 defeat of Osasuna. — APP

Show the
world...

FROM PAGE 01

The prime minister urged the nation that they have to struggle against three "mice" — Zardari, Fazl, and PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif — for the future of the country. "But I also promise you that I will hunt them down," he vowed as he called on the people to support him in the cause. PM Imran Khan claimed that the Opposition has started horse-trading to make their no-confidence motion — against the prime minister — successful. "They want to oust me because they know that if I am in power for another year, all of them will be in jails [...] and the first thing they plan on doing after coming into power is to dismantle NAB," he said. The premier said the coming days are decisive for the country as all the "thieves" have gathered on the same page and they have given "me a chance to bowl out three wickets in a single ball". PM Imran Khan reiterated his challenge and said that during his government's tenure, the development has been better as compared to the tenure of the previous governments of PPP and PML-N. PM Imran Khan, lashing out at Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, said he blamed him to be part of the "Jewish" lobby. "But the person who was blamed to be part of the Jewish lobby turned out to be the one to get a resolution against Islamophobia passed in the United Nations." "I, my Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, our ambassador Munir Akram, and our Foreign Office were trying to get a resolution against Islamophobia passed in the United Nations for the last three years," he said.

PM Khan is
an honest...

FROM PAGE 01

has it joined the Opposition. "Prime Minister Imran Khan is honest and his intentions are also good," Elahi said on Wednesday in a statement that could be considered a fence mending move. The senior PML-Q leader and Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervez Elahi, in an interview with a private TV channel, had said that all allies of the government have a 100% tilt towards the Opposition. Responding to a question, Elahi had seconded PPP Chairperson Asif Ali Zardari's claim of having more than 172 lawmakers' support on the Opposition's side besides "plenty of surprises in store". Pervaiz had also held the government responsible for its trouble, terming it devoid of wisdom. However, today, Elahi said that PML-Q is still an ally of the PTI but a separate party. "We are allies and a separate party. There are different views in a party but decisions are taken through consultations." "They are part of the government and have supported the government in every difficult time," Parvez Elahi added. The PML-Q leader said that they have been pointing out public issues since day one and advised the government to consult allies for its own good.

Babar's historic 196 lead
Pakistan to earn draw

Resuming at overnight score of 192-2, Abdullah and Babar continued their solid form and added 57 runs together before Abdullah caught in the slips

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Babar Azam (196) played one of the finest Test match innings as he absorbed a humungous amount of 425 balls, forging an instrumental 228-run stand with inexperienced Abdullah Shafique (96), while Mohammad Rizwan also scored a crucial hundred to help Pakistan pull off an unbelievable draw in the 2nd Test against Australia the National Stadium. Though in the last session as well, it looked like Pakistan will draw the Test as Babar and Rizwan were looking well set. But it was Nathan Lyon who was brought Australia back into the match and he picked three wickets in quick time. He removed Babar and the next delivery he removed Faheem Ashraf on the first. Sajid Khan after absorbing 10 balls was removed by Lyon. But after Sajid's departure, the next batter Nauman Ali blocked



the deliveries very well, while Rizwan reached his fantastic hundred as Pakistan successfully drew the Test. At Tea, Pakistan scored 310-4 with Babar at 168-not-out. Mohammad Rizwan supported

him after Fawad Alam fell to Cummins after scoring nine runs. Earlier, Australian skipper Cummins struck just eight minutes before lunch to remove opener Abdullah Shafique as Pakistan were forced to walk out with 254-3 on the scoreboard on Day 5 of the second Test.

Resuming at overnight score of 192-2, Abdullah and Babar continued their solid form and added 57 runs together before Abdullah caught in the slips. The right-handed batter missed his second Test century by just four runs. His 97-run knock included six boundaries and a six. Hometown boy Fawad Alam joined Babar at the crease who was batting solidly, having scored his sixth century the other day. Babar walked off being not out for 133 runs whereas Fawad scored three before lunch. Cummins, Nathan Lyon, and Cameron Green shared a wicket so far in this innings.

Badosa keeps Indian Wells
title defence on track

NEWS DESK



INDIAN WELLS: Spain's Paula Badosa kept her Indian Wells WTA title defence on track Tuesday, holding off determined Canadian Leylah Fernandez to reach the quarter-finals in the California desert. Badosa, seeded fifth, saved five of the six break points she faced and kept last year's US Open runner-up under pressure — converting three of her 12 break chances. "Today was very tough," said Badosa, who lifted the trophy last October in a tournament moved from its usual March date because of the coronavirus pandemic. "Leylah is an amazing player, very fast and good timing. I knew I had

to fight and serve very well. I think I did that the entire match." Badosa is vying to become the first woman to win back-to-back Indian Wells titles since Martina Navratilova in 1990-91. She gained the upper hand in the second set with a break for 3-2, then saved a pair of break points in the eighth game to take a 5-3 lead.

"In the important moments, like 4-3, down the break points, I think I stayed very composed," added Badosa, who next faces Veronica Kudermetova, a 7-6 (7/5), 6-7 (5/7), 7-5 winner over Marketa Vondrousova.

World number four Iga Swiatek, the highest-ranked player remaining in the women's field, rallied from a set down for a third straight match to book her quarter-final berth, beating crafty German veteran Angelique Kerber 4-6, 6-2, 6-3. Swiatek, the 2020 French Open champion, is coming off a title in Doha last month, but the 20-year-old admitted it took her a while to figure out how to tackle Kerber — another former Grand Slam champion.

"Truth be told, I wasn't really sure what my tactics should be, if I should be more aggressive or play more patient game," Swiatek said. "But at the end I think I made the right decision in right time, in right moments of the match." She said Kerber showed her a different game than she'd expected after practising with the German. "I felt like she wanted to use her experience and kind of trick me," Swiatek said. Swiatek next faces American Madison Keys, who beat British qualifier Harriet Dart 6-1, 6-4.

Former world number one Simona Halep of Romania, seeded 24th, swept into the quarter-finals with a 6-1, 6-4 victory over 26th-seeded compatriot Sorana Cirstea. Halep, a two-time Grand Slam champion is in the quarters for the fifth time at Indian Wells, where she lifted the trophy in 2015. Halep will play Petra Martic for a place in the semi-finals. Croatia's Martic beat Liudmila Samsonova 7-6 (8/6), 6-4. Sixth-seeded Maria Sakkari of Greece advanced with a victory over Australian qualifier Daria Saville, who was trailing 4-1 when she retired with a left thigh injury.

Babar continues
to break
numerous records

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Skipper Babar Azam continues to register multiple records as Pakistan looks to create history on Day Five of the second Test at the National Stadium in Karachi. Babar Azam, who was unable to score a Test century since December 2019, surpassed his own previous best of 143 in the fourth innings of the Test. Babar is batting on 182* at the end of 145 overs. Pakistan requires 157 more runs in 27 overs to create history. Babar Azam surpassed Shoaib Malik's (369) record of playing most deliveries by a Pakistani batter in the fourth innings during his knock. Babar also created a record for the highest fourth inning total by a Test captain, surpassing England's Micheal Atherton, who scored 185 against South Africa in 1995. Another record the 27-year-old broke during his knock is most runs by a Pakistani batter in the fourth innings. He crossed Younis Khan, who made 171* against Sri Lanka in 2015. The right-handed batsman is set to score his maiden double ton in pursuit of a record chase of 506.

Novak Djokovic
expected to defend
French Open title

PARIS: French Open organisers said on Wednesday that Novak Djokovic is allowed to defend his title as the tournament prepares to stage what is expected to be the first Grand Slam without any COVID-19 related restrictions since the pandemic broke two years ago.

France has lifted restrictions in almost all public spaces — except hospitals, nursing homes and public transports — on Monday, meaning the Roland Garros stadium should be operating at full capacity with Djokovic taking it to the red dirt courts. "As things stand, nothing stands in the way of Djokovic taking part in the French Open," tournament director Amelie Mauresmo told a news conference on Wednesday. The 20-time Grand Slam winner was unable to defend his Australian Open title in January after being deported from the country in a furore after being initially admitted to the tournament despite not being vaccinated against coronavirus. The 34-year-old is also out of this month's ATP 1000 tournaments at Indian Wells and Miami, unable to enter the United States without a proof of vaccination. While that is not required to enter France or any sporting event in the country, French tennis federation (FFT) president Gilles Moretton warned that things could change before the tournament starts on May 22. — Web Desk

Atletico eliminate Man Utd
in Champions League last 16

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Atletico Madrid knocked Manchester United out of the UEFA Champions League, beating the English club 1-0 in a round of 16 second leg match Tuesday. Brazilian defender Renan Lodi scored the winning goal for Atletico Madrid with a header in the 41st minute at Manchester's Old Trafford stadium. Thanks to his goal, the visitors bagged the quarterfinals ticket. The first leg held at Madrid's Wanda Metropolitan Stadium on Feb. 23 ended 1-1, so after their latest victory, Atletico Madrid won 2-1 on aggregate. Following the home loss, Manchester United's journey in Europe is over for the 2021-22 season. Manchester United's title drought continues as the Red Devils have not won any trophies since 2017, when they were the champions in the second-tier UEFA Europa League. Separately, Portugal's Benfica also reserved their place in the Champions League quarterfinals. Benfica's Uruguayan forward Darwin Nunez scored against Ajax in the 77th minute to secure a 1-0 win for the Lisbon club in Amsterdam. In this way, Benfica won 3-2 on aggregate to reach the last eight in Europe's top-tier club tournament. Ajax have been eliminated and will now focus on the



Dutch league.

Atletico Madrid, Bayern Munich, Benfica, Liverpool, Manchester City and Real Madrid were confirmed for the quarterfinalists. Two other clubs will join these six teams after Wednesday's matches. The quarterfinals draw will be held on March 18 in Nyon, Switzerland. The 2022 Champions League final will be played at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis on May 28.

Pak scraps
all Covid...

FROM PAGE 01

vaccination against COVID-19, but that too till the vaccination ratio reaches 80% or above. "Then we will consider if we still need to keep the restriction for vaccination in place," he said. The NCOC's data for Wednesday showed that 493 new coronavirus cases were reported in the last 24 hours while the positivity ratio stood at 1.42%. Earlier, the government had also decided to shut down the NCOC by the end of next month and the responsibilities of the forum will be carried out by the National Institute of Health. "The positivity ratio has been continuously decreasing in the country for the last seven to eight weeks," the minister said, adding that the number of patients' admission to hospitals has also declined. He said that the NCOC observed that the number of patients in critical care units has not only dipped but has also fallen to the lowest level since October 2020, while a further decline is expected. Further explaining the COVID-19 situation, Umar said that 78% of the population, eligible for vaccination against the virus — individuals above the age of 12 — have received the first dose of anti-COVID-19 vaccine, while 70% have been fully vaccinated.

US envoy
praises...

FROM PAGE 01

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr. Faisal Sultan, Chargé d'affaires Aggeler praised the NCOC's success and highlighted the importance of U.S.-Pakistani partnership in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Chargé Aggeler emphasized our strong collaboration, which extends across many sectors, including health: "This year marks the 75th anniversary of Pakistan's birth as a nation, and the 75th anniversary of our bilateral relationship. Our visit here today is a testament to the strong partnership that the United States and Pakistan have enjoyed since we recognized this country's independence on August 15, 1947. And this country's health sector embodies the benefits of that partnership." Over the past two years, the NCOC has successfully coordinated the Pakistani government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pakistan has administered over 219 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines, fully vaccinated over 100 million people, and lowered the nationwide positivity rate to less than 1.5 percent — all laudable achievements.

PIA connects
Pakistan,
Azerbaijan

FROM PAGE 01

promote brotherly ties with Central Asian Countries and also keeping in view the demand of passengers to increase revenue and to facilitate flights to Baku, one of the emerging tourists destinations that offer ease of Visa facility, having friendly and welcoming people with same religion and lots of historic sites to visit both in Pakistan and Azerbaijan. The inaugural flights departed from the two cities on Wednesday morning. PIA will operate one flight per week from Lahore and Karachi to Baku. Simple Cake cutting ceremonies were held at Karachi and Lahore Airports. Both flights operated with full loads. CEO PIA Air Marshal Arshad Malik welcomed the Passengers of the first flight from Lahore. He met with the passengers and exchanged views with them. The passengers thanked CEO PIA Air Marshal Arshad Malik and the airline's management for initiating direct non-stop flights to Baku. Sharing his views on the occasion, he said that the flights to Baku will not only facilitate in trade between the two countries but also promote tourism and further build upon brotherly relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. CEO PIA thanked the passengers for making PIA their preferred choice for travel. He said that the airline's network expansion is under way more flights will be added to the airline's network including non-stop flights to Australia.

Türkiye to Russia: Ukraine 'war' must stop

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey has displayed a clear stance in the Russia-Ukraine crisis from the very beginning and has distinctly demonstrated its balanced, objective and fair approach that favors law and justice, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said Wednesday. Ahead of his meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in Moscow, the foreign minister said: "As a country with good relations with both sides (Russia and Ukraine), we continued our role as an honest mediator and facilitator despite all the difficulties." During a joint press conference after the talks, Çavuşoğlu also said: "We have had a clear stance since the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war. We have done what we can to open room for diplomacy. We are putting efforts into achieving a humanitarian and permanent cease-fire." "We will continue to increase our efforts prioritizing diplomacy in this process. Without the trust of Russia and Ukraine, we would not have been able to carry out these efforts adequately." Turkey's priority is the evacuation of its na-

tional and civilians from the Ukrainian city of Mariupol, he underlined, calling for an "urgent" humanitarian cease-fire. The minister added that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan may hold discussions with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin soon to talk about the issue. Çavuşoğlu also expressed his hope that the Russian and Ukrainian leaders will meet soon and reach a permanent cease-fire to



end the war and casualties. For his part, Lavrov said that Turkey has been following a pragmatic line with a balanced approach. "We have some differences of opinion regarding Ukraine. However, Turkey's balanced stance is very valuable to us," he said. He also added that Moscow values Ankara's responsible approach to the implementation of the Montreux Convention. Earlier in the day, Lavrov said that Mos-

cow views mediation offers from Turkey and Israel to resolve the crisis in Ukraine positively.

Speaking in an interview with the Russian channel RBC TV, Lavrov mentioned his latest meeting with Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum in Turkey, noting throughout the entire meeting, which lasted an hour and a half, Kuleba only repeated public statements he had made before. During the meeting — held in the presence of Çavuşoğlu — Lavrov said that despite several reminders that he wished to hear information that was not public knowledge, Kuleba "did not put forward any new ideas." The Russian foreign minister stressed that high-level meetings are organized to address difficult issues that cannot be overcome otherwise. Lavrov also said the meetings in Belarus are currently the most effective format and that the negotiators are close to signing an agreement. He expressed hope that Kyiv will not change its position at the last moment. Asked about the mediation efforts by some countries, the diplomat said France, Israel, Switzerland and Turkey have offered mediation.

Briefs

Baku detains suspect spying for Armenia

BAKU: Azerbaijan's State Security Service (SSS) has detained a suspect engaged in anti-Azerbaijani collaboration with Armenia, the service reported on March 16. An Azerbaijani citizen, Mammadov Emil (41), was detained as part of the initiated criminal case, the report added. Grounds for suspicion have been established as a result of the State Security Service's investigation into Mammadov's secret cooperation with Armenian special services on the territory of a third country in exchange for financial interest in order to aid them in carrying out duties that threaten Azerbaijan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, state security, and defense capabilities, the service said. Furthermore, substantial suspicions were established that he had been instructed to collect information that could be used against state security, to act in accordance with the given instructions, and to comply with the confidentiality and conspiracy requirements with the Armenian special services. - Agencies

Belarusian volunteers head to Kyiv to fight Russia

LVIV: Foreign fighters from Belarus departed on Wednesday on their way to the Ukrainian capital Kyiv from the city of Lviv further west to fight in the ongoing war against Russia. "We'll fight for the independence of Ukraine. Because, we know very well that if Ukraine isn't independent, Belarus won't be independent in the future," said Pavel Kulzhanka, who is heading the group. Kulzhanka emphasized that, unlike Belarusian President Aleksander Lukashenko, they would stand with the Ukrainians. Donning their fatigues and weapons, the 20 fighters who came to the train station in Lviv said they were ready to fulfill the tasks the Ukrainian army would give them. - Agencies

Australia must prepare for Russian retaliation

CANBERRA: The Australian defense minister on Wednesday said his country is providing Ukraine with lethal weapons to defend itself from Russian attacks, and should therefore be prepared for Moscow's retaliation. "Australia is now providing lethal military equipment to help Ukrainians defend themselves and there's more we are prepared to do to help them in their fight against their Russian aggressors," Peter Dutton said in his address at the United States Studies Centre in Canberra, according to a transcript shared by his office.

64 dams out of 100 completed in Baluchistan

First Fire of Bin Qasim Power Station 3 900MW Unit-1 launched

DNA

ISLAMABAD: 64 out of 100 dams have been completed so far in Balochistan while 36 are under construction, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The Government is sponsoring construction of these 100 dams in Baluchistan. The project has been prioritized and divided into 5 packages. Package-I of the project comprising 20 dams was launched in June 2009. The project amounting Rs.2.154 billion was successfully completed in June 2015. The dams can save up to 44,438

Acre ft of water whereas can irrigate 25,850 acres of land. Package-II, comprising of 26 dams was completed in December 2019. The dams amounting Rs.4.639 billion can save up to 70,456 Acre ft of water and can irrigate 44,000 acres of land. Package-III of the project is comprised of 20 dams, out of which 18 are completed. The cost of the dams are Rs.8.867 billion. The dams can store 158,260 Acre ft of water and can irrigate 58,500 acres of land. Earlier Chief Minister of Baluchistan Mir Abdul Qudus Bizenjo said that the

construction of 100 dams and other water resources development projects would be ensured on a war footing basis to overcome the water shortage in the province. Appropriate conservation of the flood flow with the help of these storage dams would serve the dual purpose of protection of cultivated land and population against frequent flood damages. It would also help augment the growth of agriculture, besides recharging of Ground Water Aquifer. Construction of 100 Dams in Baluchistan would Supply about 52,000 Acre ft (64.14million m3) of con-

served flood water for direct irrigation and drinking purposes and will benefit about 25,850 acres (10,466 hectares) of fertile cultivable land. It is to be noted that the construction of these small and medium dams in Baluchistan province will provide direct and indirect opportunities of livelihood to the population of the area during implementation and operation of the projects. **First Fire of Bin Qasim Power Station 3900MW Unit-1 launched**

The Bin Qasim Power Station 3 (BQPS-III) 900MW project unit-1 first fire has been successfully carried out, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. Unit 1 is based on regasified liquid natural gas (RLNG), which will largely meet the power demand of Karachi, the business hub of the country. The project includes two SGT5-4000F gas turbines installed in two 450MW combined-cycle power generation units. The SGT5-4000F gas turbines are renowned for high performance and low-cost power generation. K-Electric, the country's largest power utility, has invested in a 900 MW RLNG plant, which is an integral

part of the business plan, aimed at bridging the power shortfall and providing smooth and reliable supply of power to the consumers. The 900 MW RLNG Power Plant will increase the power utility's generation capacity, efficiency, and reliability. K-Electric's total investment for the project is \$ 650 million. K-Electric had awarded Siemens AG and China's Harbin Electric International Co., Ltd a contract to build a 900-megawatt combined cycle power plant. The work began in late 2019 which is now near its completion.

Uzbek, Turkmen leaders agree to enhance co-op



TASHKENT: President Shavkat Mirziyoyev had a telephone conversation with the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov and President-elect of this country Serdar Berdimuhamedov, reports "Dunyo" IA correspondent. According to the press service of the Head of our state, the President of Uzbekistan warmly congratulated the Turkmen side on the successful holding of the most important political event - the Presidential Elections, and the convincing victory of Serdar Berdimuhamedov, sincerely wishing peace, well-being and prosperity to the fraternal people of Turkmenistan. Confidence was expressed in the continuation of joint work aimed at consistently strengthening friendship, good neighborliness and strategic partnership between Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. The current issues of the bilateral agenda and regional interaction were also discussed. The positive dynamics of the development of multifaceted cooperation between the two countries were noted with satisfaction. - APP



Mandarin-speaking help desk set up to facilitate Chinese investors

SECP informed that 2,349 new companies were registered in February 2022, raising the total number of registered companies to 163,333

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has set up a designated Help Desk to facilitate investors from China, the Commission said, according to Gwadar Pro. In a statement, SECP elaborated that the Chinese Help Desk was staffed with a team proficient in Mandarin and aimed to provide requisite support to Chinese investors for registration of their businesses in Pakistan. Besides, Company Incorporation Guide in Chinese, Turkish, Arabic, Urdu and Spanish languages are also available at SECP's website, it added. SECP informed that 2,349 new companies were registered in February 2022, raising the total number of registered companies to 163,333. The accumulated capitali-



zation (paid-up-capital) of newly incorporated companies is Pakistani Rs 2.2 billion, added SECP. In February, about 62 percent companies were registered as private lim-

ited companies, while 35 percent were registered as single member companies while remaining 3 percent were registered as public unlisted companies, not for profit associations, trade

organizations, foreign companies and Limited Liability Partnership (LLP). About 99.5 percent of companies were registered online and 236 foreign users were registered from overseas.

Pakistan single country exhibition held in Baghdad

DNA

BAGHDAD: The Embassy of Pakistan in Iraq organized First ever "Pakistan Single Country Exhibition" in Baghdad. The opening ceremony was held today and the exhibition will last for next three days. 84 leading Pakistani companies and more than two hundred businessmen are participating in the exhibition displaying and promoting Pakistani Products. The exhibitors are from different cities of Pakistan covering more than 20 sectors of Pakistani products including Rice, Sports, Textile, Food and Grain, Cos-

metics, Logistics, Pharmaceutical, Fan, Surgical instrumentsetc. H.E. AyadAllawi, former Prime Minister and H.E. Mr. Adnan Dirjal, Minister for Youth and Sports, Republic of Iraq inaugurated the exhibition. The Deputy Secretary General, Council of Ministers, Official from Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade, President Iraqi Federation of Chambers of Commerce along with large number of Iraqi businessmen, Ambassadors and Diplomatic Community attended the opening ceremony. The exhibition will pave the way for Pakistani businessmen to explore Iraq market and increase trade between two countries.



Turkey kill 8 YPG terrorists in Syria

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkish security forces killed 8 members of Syria's Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) in northern Syria, Turkey's Defense Ministry said on Wednesday. The YPG members were "neutralized" when they were in preparation for an "attack" against Turkey's Operation Euphrates Shield zone in northern Syria, the Turkish ministry tweeted. Turkish authorities often use the term "neutralized" to imply "terrorists" killed, wounded, or captured in security operations. Turkey's forces and the YPG members often exchange fire on the Syrian border, and the tension has increased in the region since early January after the killing of three Turkish soldiers when a bomb exploded on its border with Syria.

European leaders return after Kyiv visit

WARSAW: The prime ministers of Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia safely returned to Poland Wednesday after a visit to Kyiv intended to show support for Ukraine as it defends itself against the Russian military onslaught. The leaders met with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Tuesday to convey a message of solidarity with Ukraine and of support for the nation's aspirations to one day join the European Union. They went ahead with the hours-long train trip despite concerns about risks to their security while traveling through a war zone. Although pronouncing their trip as an EU mission, officials in Brussels cast it as something the three leaders had undertaken on their own. Polish government spokesman Piotr Mueller said Wednesday morning that the three had returned safely to Poland. Officials hadn't given details about their schedule for security reasons. Prime Ministers Mateusz Morawiecki of Poland, Petr Fiala of the Czech Republic and Janez Jansa of Slovenia were joined by Poland's Deputy Prime Minister Jaroslaw Kaczynski - the chief of the ruling conservative party and the country's most powerful leader. At a news briefing late Tuesday in Kyiv, Kaczynski said he believed that a NATO peacekeeping mission is needed in Ukraine. The remark generated much discussion in Poland on Wednesday, with some commentators saying the prospect could risk drawing NATO into a war with Russia. - Agencies

Germany sees Covid surge

FOREIGN DESK

BERLIN: Germany's daily coronavirus cases rose to a near-record high on Wednesday as authorities warned that a new subtype of the omicron strain is spreading quickly across the country. The Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the country's disease control agency, confirmed 262,593 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, and 269 coronavirus-related fatalities. The number of new cases was only slightly less than last Thursday's number of 262,752 infections, the highest figure so far. The relaxation of anti-coronavirus measures last month and the spread of the highly contagious omicron sub-variant BA.2 were the main factors driving the spike in cases. The new subtype, which is more transmissible than the initial omicron strain BA.1, now accounts more than 48% of sequenced coronavirus cases in the country, according to the RKI. Despite the surge in infections, the majority of omicron cases have been mild so far, not requiring hospitalization.

Taiwan question is different from Ukraine

AGENCIES

BEIJING: The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) authority recently has been hyping up the situation in Ukraine and the so-called threat from the Chinese mainland, deliberately increasing cross-Straits confrontation and preaching wars, which exposes their hypocrisy, Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council said on Wednesday. On March 9, deputy regional leader of Taiwan Lai Ching-te openly said that the island "needs to have the capability to defend itself" in an interview with Yahoo TV. His remarks came after Tsai Ing-wen, the regional leader of Taiwan, threatened to not "rule out firing the first shot." Zhu Fenglian, a spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, on Wednesday said, "we are willing to create a broad space for peaceful reunification, but we will not leave any space for various forms of separatist activities."

Vietnam's daily Covid cases hit new record

FOREIGN DESK

HANOI: Vietnam reported 180,558 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, its new daily record, up 5,078 cases from Tuesday, according to its Ministry of Health. The new infections, logged in 62 localities nationwide, included 180,552 domestically transmitted and six imported. Vietnamese capital Hanoi remained the epidemic hotspot with 26,220 cases on Wednesday, followed by central NgheAn province with 10,797 cases, and northern VinhPhuc province with 8,875 cases.

Baku urges Yerevan to start result-oriented talks

DNA

BAKU: Baku has said that Armenia must show readiness to start substantive and result-oriented negotiations with Azerbaijan, the ministry reported on March 15. The Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry made the statement in response to Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan's proposals for normalizing bilateral ties between the two nations. "If Armenia also takes the issue seriously, then it must present its concrete proposals and thus must demonstrate its readiness to start substantive and result-oriented negotiations," the ministry said. It emphasized that Azerbaijan's position on restoring relations with Armenia is clear and consistent, adding that "we do not need to repeat the position we have repeatedly stated". Azerbaijan has proposed ideas in this regard and is willing to go further in this direction, taking into account the importance of

normalizing relations between the two countries as well as peace-building activities in the region in the aftermath of the conflict, the ministry added. Mirzoyan told Armenian media that both Armenia and Azerbaijan had already mutually recognized the territorial integrity and absence of territorial claims towards each other by signing the "CIS Agreement" on December 8, 1991. "For Armenia, the main and fundamental thing is to guarantee the rights and freedoms of Karabakh Armenians and the final clarification of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. For us, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is not a territorial issue but a question of rights," he said. On March 14, Azerbaijan made public the five basic principles for normalizing relations with Armenia. To recap, after submitting fundamental principles to Armenia on the normalization of relations between the two countries, Armenia turned to the OSCE Minsk

Group co-chairs for peace talks. Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov earlier told Anadolu news agency that Azerbaijan had sent a five-point proposal to Armenia to normalize relations and was awaiting a response from the opposite side. "The message is this: the factor of occupation is gone. In this situation, the Azerbaijani side, despite all the difficulties and problems of the past, is in favor of normalizing relations with Armenia," he said. He stressed that Armenia has not responded to Azerbaijan's proposal for almost a year. The minister described Azerbaijan's recent new proposal to Armenia as a sign of goodwill. "We have proposed to the Armenian side some fundamental principles, which include the normalization of relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. We expressed our readiness to develop relations on the basis of certain principles. Armenia should consider this and give its answer," he said.

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Briefs

7.3 quake hits Japan, tsunami advisory issued

TOKYO: A powerful 7.3-magnitude quake jolted east Japan on Wednesday night, rattling the capital Tokyo and prompting a tsunami advisory for parts of the northeast coast, the Japan Meteorological Agency said. The quake was centred off the coast of the Fukushima region at a depth of 60 kilometres and shortly after it hit at 11:36 pm (1436 GMT) an advisory for tsunami waves of one metre was issued for parts of the coast. There were no immediate reports of damage or injuries, but more than two million households were left without power, including 700,000 in Tokyo, electricity provider TEPCO said. TEPCO also said in a tweet that it was checking operations at the Fukushima nuclear plant that went into meltdown 11 years ago after a huge 9.0-magnitude quake and tsunami hit off the eastern coast on March 11, 2011. Japan sits on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc of intense seismic activity that stretches through South-east Asia and across the Pacific basin. — Agencies

UN resolution is a great achievement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said on Wednesday that it was great achievement of entire Muslim Ummah that the UN General Assembly unanimously passed a resolution against Islamophobia moved by Pakistan's permanent representative on behalf of OIC and decided to observe March 15 International Day for Combating Islamophobia every year. Addressing a press conference here, the minister said that Prime Minister Imran Khan always raised the issue of Islamophobia, at international forums on behalf of 1.5 billion Muslims and conveyed that Islam was a religion of peace and has nothing to do with terrorism. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan forcefully presented the case of Muslim population and highlighted its sensitivities. He said the very voice of Imran Khan is heard and given importance at the international level. The minister said during the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Mecca in 2019, Prime Minister Imran Khan spoke on Islamophobia and the dignity and honour of the Holy Prophet. Farrukh said that in his address to the UN General Assembly in September 2019, Prime Minister Imran Khan raised the issue of Islamophobia and honour of prophethood before the world. The minister said that due to the hatred spread against Muslims through Islamophobia Muslims were targeted in the world, the attack inside a mosque in New Zealand and Hijab ban in India and attack on Muslim women in the West were its manifestation.

'UNGA resolution result of PM's efforts'

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has termed the UN General Assembly's resolution a result of sustained personal efforts of Prime Minister Imran Khan who has boldly raised the issue of Islamophobia at different international fora. In a statement issued on Wednesday, the chief minister praised the tireless efforts and vision of PM Imran Khan for the approval of the resolution in the UN General Assembly to tackle Islamophobia. Usman Buzdar said PM Imran Khan raised a strong voice against Islamophobia in the UN and proved his tenacious leadership globally. PM Imran Khan has emerged as the leader of the Islamic world and this is also the achievement of the entire Islamic world, he concluded. — APP

Indonesia-Pakistan cultural festival celebrated at UAF

Indonesian Ambassador Mr. Adam M. Tugio inaugurated the event along with the UAF Vice-Chancellor, Prof Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indonesian Embassy with one of the renowned universities of Pakistan collaborated to conduct a food, nutrition, and cultural festival in University of Faisalabad (UAF). Indonesia was invited as a Guest Country of the 2022 Spring Festival of the UAF celebrated by the Faculty of Nutrition. Indonesian Ambassador Mr. Adam M. Tugio inaugurated the event along with the UAF Vice-Chancellor, Prof Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan, and Dean Prof Dr. Masood Sadiq Butt at the National Institute of Food Science and Technology (NIFSAT). The objective of the festival was to further strengthen the ties between the two Muslim brotherly countries Indonesia and Pakistan particularly through showcasing food, cultural dances, tradition, tourism, sports, and music. The Indonesian Embassy also set up its stall at the festival. In the Indonesian Stall, traditional arts, famous Batik dresses, tourism promotion, Indonesian products, as well as 8-10 traditional dishes of Indonesian cuisines were presented to the visitors. The visitors enjoyed the warm welcome and were attracted by the culture, traditions, and customs of the Indonesian people, and enjoyed tasting the national dishes. Ambassador Tugio paid a visit to food stalls and appreciated the efforts of the students and the variety of tasty food items presented by the UAF students. Ambassador Tugio highlighted, "there are many similarities between Indonesia and Pakistan in terms of history, culture, religion, Culinary, and education system." Cultural performances by the Indonesian and Pakistani students were held in the evening. The President Pakistan Pencak Silat federation, Mr. Rana Abdul Majeed along with his students performed Indonesian martial art, "Pencak silat." Pencak Silat involves a full-body fighting style in which any part of the body can be used and attacked. This style of fighting was originated in Indonesia as a form of self-defense and has since evolved into a competitive sport. The sport eventually has spread to several South Asian countries. Indonesian students also performed Hadrah art, which is the most popular religious and Sufi music art among Indonesian Muslims. In Hadra, the recitation of Quranic verses and religious poems are performed with musical instruments. UAF Vice-Chancellor, Prof Dr. Iqrar Ahmad Khan expressed his gratitude to the Indonesian Embassy for providing resources and for the outstanding joined collaboration which has substantially enhanced the cultural ties between two brotherly nations. Ambassador Tugio informed students about the opportunities available through Indonesia's scholarship programs, emphasizing that the majority of the universities that give scholarships are among the world's top 500 universities, according to the QS World University Rankings for 2021. He also lauded the brilliant young students of UAF for their brilliant performances in food exhibitions, promoting cultural dances, folk singing, and classical drama performances. He also emphasized that Pakistan's youth have tremendous talent and potential in a variety of sectors. The event ended with the prize distribution to the students who performed exceptionally in the exhibition. The spring festival co-organised by



the UAF and the Indonesian Embassy consisted of two major activities: cultural performances and food festival, and international workshops on the contribution of vegetable oils toward the Sustainable Development

Goals. The speakers included Prof. Dr Muhammad Firdaus from the Institute of Agriculture Bogor <IPB> and Mr. Djono Albar Burhan, MM of the Indonesian Palm Oil Smallholders Association.

Pilot killed after trainer jet crashes in Italy

ROME: A pilot died after a Leonardo trainer aircraft crashed in mountains north of Italy's Lake Como on Wednesday, the Italian aerospace and defence giant said. Italian media reports said the victim was British. A UK embassy spokeswoman said it was "urgently seeking more information". The M-346 jet, intended for military pilot training, went down near the town of Colico at the lake's northeastern side at midday. "The cause of the accident is under investigation. Unfortunately, the rescue teams arriving at the site of the accident ascertained the loss of one of the two pilots," said Leonardo in a statement. — Agencies

Afghans in US granted 18-month protected status

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Afghan citizens living in the US with expired visas will be given temporary protected status for 18 months due to precarious conditions in their country, the Department of Homeland Security announced Wednesday. "This TPS designation will help to protect Afghan nationals who have already been living in the United States from returning to unsafe conditions," said Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. DHS said Afghans face reduced security and deteriorated living conditions since the Taliban seized power last August. It pointed to "a collapsing public sector, a worsening economic crisis, drought, food and water insecurity, lack of access to health care.



ISLAMABAD: Nicolae Goia, Ambassador of Romania to Pakistan called on Advisor to PM on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Ayub Afridi to discuss ways to boost legal migration of skilled and unskilled workers. — DNA

Special powers being given to Rangers, Police, FC: Rasheed

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Wednesday said special powers were being given to Police, Rangers and Frontier Constabulary (FC) in federal capital from March 20 to April 2. Talking to media persons after workshop on Anti Human Trafficking organized by the United Nations here, the minister said Police, Rangers and FC have full capability to deal with any untoward situation. He said around 1000 personnel of FC and Rangers have been summoned to Islamabad for performing security duty adding that if needed more personnel would be deployed to ensure law and order situation. Sheikh Rasheed said the government would provide full security and protection to both rallies of March 25 and March 27. Ensuring protection to lives and properties of the people were the responsibility of Interior Ministry, he added. He said if the opposition wished to hold rally on March 27 then they should meet Deputy Commissioner Islamabad for devising its modalities. The administration would provide safe passage to the opposition rally, he added. However, he reiterated that no one would be allowed to take law into their hands and violators would be dealt with iron hands. The minister said Pakistan was facing international threats of terrorism adding that maintenance of peace and countering terrorism was not only responsibility of the government but also the opposition. Regarding no confidence motion against the Prime Minister, he said there would be no assembly session on March 27 due to Sunday. — DNA

Bahraini commander calls on COAS

DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Shaikh Mohamed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, Commander of the National Guard of the Kingdom of Bahrain called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and measures to further enhance profes-

sional cooperation between both the armies were discussed. COAS said that Pakistan values its strong diplomatic, economic and defence relations with Kingdom of Bahrain. Both reiterated the desire to further enhance bilateral cooperation including efforts for peace and security in the region. The visiting dignitary acknowledged professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and vowed to enhance cooperation in various fields. He also appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation and successful border management.



RAWALPINDI: General Shaikh Mohamed Bin Isa Bin Salman Al-Khalifa, Commander of the National Guard of the Kingdom of Bahrain called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ. — DNA

MoU inked as follow up of agreements in Dubai Expo

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: As a follow-up of Dubai Expo KP Chapter held in the month of January, and MoU signed during the event. In this regard, Senior delegation of UAE, led by H.E. Sheikh Abdulaziz Jamal Al Qasimi (Member of Royal Family of Sharjah UAE), and Mr. Salman Wisal, Chairman Almasa Group, Mr. Wakil Khan, Virtual Smart City, Syed Qayum Shah, Ex President PBWO, Zahoor Khan, Virtual Smart System, Mr. Rashid Ali, Amato Couture Fashion House, UAE, Visited Peshawar, according to a statement issued here on Wednesday. The Vice Chairman, KPBOIT welcomed the delegation. The delegation was given

a presentation by CEO, KPBOIT on the aspects and way forward of MoUs and consolidating the documents to sustainable project and also highlighted areas where further cooperation's and investment can be made through sustainable projects in Public Private Partnership. The Head of visiting delegation highlighted that his follow-up team will remain in the KP for another two days for consolidating the signed MoUs. The CEO, KPBOIT also briefed the delegation on sector wise projects in SEZs, Tourism, Energy & Power, Mines & Minerals, IT, Agriculture and other areas. He also highlighted the huge potential for investment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including infrastructure projects in Public Private Partnership Healthcare and Education Sector.

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