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Muslim countries must be united against Western propaganda

Detailed News On Page-01

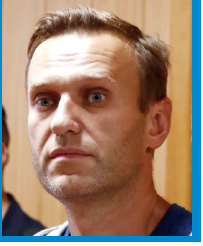
Pakistan highly values its ties with Azerbaijan

Detailed News On Page-08



Navalny gets nine more years in prison

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Azeri President felicitates Pakistan

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has sent a congratulatory letter to Pakistani counterpart Arif Alvi, Azertag reported on March 22. "Dear Mr. President, it is on the occasion of the National Holiday of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan - the Pakistan Day that on my own behalf and on behalf of the people of Azerbaijan, I offer my cordial congratulations and warm wishes to you and your brotherly people."

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UN Chief underlines cooperation

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres Tuesday, noting the close relationship between the UN and OIC, said that it was more urgent than ever to accelerate cooperation and devise common strategies to face the abounding challenges. "Today, the imperative to join forces, devise common strategies, and draw on our comparative advantages is more urgent than ever. In my recent report on Our Common Agenda, I have offered proposals to update global governance, better manage risks and threats, and build the safer, more resilient, and inclusive world set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development." - APP

Saudi FM lauds Pak efforts

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Foreign Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al-Saud Tuesday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa and appreciated Pakistan's efforts for hosting the OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security, current situation in Afghanistan and bilateral defence relations between the two countries were discussed.

Pak leading Muslim Ummah

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the Council of Foreign Ministers of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) met here on Tuesday to discuss the issues faced by the Muslims globally, Minister for Information Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said it was a matter of pride for every Pakistani that the country was leading the entire Muslim Ummah. Talking to the media here, the minister said as many as 32 foreign ministers of different countries and more than 700 delegates are participating in the OIC conference which was underway at the Parliament House to discuss the problems confronted by the Muslims.

OIC needs to do more on Palestine, Kashmir

Prime Minister Imran Khan delivers spell-binding speech; calls upon Muslim countries be united against Western propaganda; terms Islamophobia day a landmark achievement

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The OIC countries on Tuesday resolved to continue supporting the just causes of people of Palestine and Kashmir. The OIC also pledged to counter effectively the Western narrative about Islamophobia. The Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan in his speech reiterated Pakistan's stand on Palestine and Kashmir adding the OIC countries need to do some practical steps in order to get these issues resolved sooner rather than later. While speaking on the 48th session of Foreign Ministers, the Prime Minister further said the world never takes us seriously especially on the issue of Palestine and Kashmir. They believe the OIC countries are only good at issuing statements and when it comes to doing something practical they simply fail. The Prime Minister further said Palestinian people were being stripped off their rights in the broad day light yet the organization of 1.5 billion people was still unmoved. He added, similarly that India chose to change the status of Kashmir in flagrant violation of all UN resolutions but unfortunately the OIC could not take a united stand on this. He said our complacency in fact encourages the opponents continue with their anti Muslim posture. He said the international community promised the Kashmiris to decide their future, regretting that the special status was also taken away illegally by India on 5th August 2019. He said India is also



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan, Foreign Ministers of China, Saudi Arabia, Secretary General of OIC attending the OIC Foreign Ministers' conference. - DNA

changing the demographic structure of the occupied territory in complete contravention of the fourth Geneva Convention. He said India is doing so by bringing settlers from outside. Regarding Afghanistan, Prime Minister Imran Khan said a stable Afghan government is the only way to stop international terrorism emanate from their soil. He urged the international community to help the Afghan people in sorting out their issues. The Prime Minister suggested the OIC play its role to stop conflict in Ukraine. He said the OIC, China and all the non-partisan countries should use their influence to resolve the crisis. Meanwhile, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Houssein Ibrahim Taha Tuesday stressed upon concerted efforts by all

the OIC member states to tackle various challenges being faced by the Muslim Ummah. Addressing the inaugural session of the OIC-Council of Foreign Ministers, he said that the 48th session was being held under the theme of 'Partnership to build unity, justice and development', and called for making of the joint efforts to realize the collective objectives of the OIC. About the Kashmir issue, he said it had not found solution for a very long time. Terming the Indian government's acts of August 5, 2019 by changing the status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir as violations of the UNSC resolutions, he reiterated OIC's call to support the rights of the Kashmiri people to self-determination in line with the resolutions of the UNSC.

The secretary general said that Palestinian people had been facing illegal Israeli occupation and the forceful colonization of their lands. Condemning the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people, he said Israeli actions were stark negation of the international laws and the UN resolutions for the peaceful settlement of the issue, by protecting the Palestinian rights to life and land. About the issue of Afghanistan, he emphasized upon further efforts to bring stability and peace. He termed the establishment of Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund on the margin of the OIC-CFM session as another effort by the member states for the financial and humanitarian support to the Afghan people.

Highlights of 48th OIC-CFM inaugural session

ISLAMABAD: Highlights of the inaugural session of the 48th Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers' (CFM) moot under the theme 'Partnering for Unity, Justice and Development':

- The foreign ministers of OIC member states, foreign guests, delegates, parliamentarians and media persons started arriving at 0900 hours
- Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi greeted the dignitaries, distinguished guests and participating delegates
- Prime Minister Imran Khan made his entry to the venue at 1115 hours. He was flanked by the OIC Secretary General Houssein Ibrahim Taha, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, President Islamic Development Bank Dr Muhammad Suleiman Al-Jasser, and Chair of the 47th OIC-CFM Hassoumi Massoudou
- The meeting commenced at 11:18am with the recitation of few verses from the Holy Quran underlining the commandments of Almighty Allah to keep unity among the ranks of Muslims and have strong faith in the Omnipotent
- As the session started, the national anthem of Pakistan was played on the occasion
- A short video of the OIC journey covering decades long struggle to protect interests of Muslim Ummah was screened at the House at 1121 hours
- Foreign Minister of the Republic of Niger and also the Chair of the 47th session of the OIC Hassoumi Massoudou in his opening remarks highlighted the role of Nigeria as the Chair of the CFM to hold seminars and webinars on the challenges faced by Ummah in the shape of extremism and Islamophobia
- After concluding his speech Massoudou invited Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi to officially hand over the Chair of the 48th session of the OIC-CFM

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Qureshi calls upon OIC to act as "reliable partners"



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi assumes Chairmanship of 48th Foreign Ministers' Conference. - DNA

SHUJAAT HAMZA/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Tuesday said it was time for the Muslim Ummah to forge a collective response to the current turmoil inside its borders and the ongoing global transition. "We must be a reliable partner in forging unity, justice, and development across the globe, but not anyone's accomplice in aggression or domination," he said in his address at 48th Session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Council of Foreign Ministers after Pakistan assumed

the Chair. The foreign minister said time had come for OIC to strengthen and equip itself to address contemporary challenges and conflicts confronting the Muslim Ummah. He mentioned that the Muslim world was facing the conflicts in the Middle East, prolonged foreign occupation, and the denial of the right to self-determination, most notably to the people of Palestine and Kashmir. "The Muslim world's resentment is increasing due to frequent external interventions in Muslim countries," he said. He pointed out that left unaddressed, these conflicts and disputes undermined the unity and solidarity of OIC countries, exposed the countries to foreign interference and intervention, fueled terrorism and extremism, and deflected attention from development goals. FM called upon OIC states to act as "reliable partners, not accomplice in aggression" To help forge a collective response, and under the theme of 'Partnering for Unity, Justice, and Development,' the foreign minister stressed uniting for justice for the rights of Muslims under occupation and conflicts with countries beyond the Ummah. "This should also include the urgency of addressing the pervasive Islamophobia facing Muslims in non-Muslim majority countries," he said. FM Qureshi emphasized partnering for development by effectively addressing the triple global crises of COVID-19, development, and climate change. He mentioned the verses of the Holy Quran as saying: "Hold fast all of you, to the cord of Allah and be not divided" The foreign minister proposed convening an OIC Ministerial Conference during 2022-2023 to assess the need for establishing a peace and security architecture akin to all other regional organizations. He said Pakistan stood ready to play its part as a bridge-builder in promoting regional and OIC-driven solutions to internal conflicts.

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Pak-China ties heading into right direction: PM

The Prime Minister warmly welcomed State Councilor Wang Yi to Pakistan

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi called on Prime Minister Imran Khan, today. The State Councilor is currently in Pakistan to attend the 48th Session of Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC-CFM). The Prime Minister warmly welcomed State Councilor

inforce Pakistan's efforts for the economic development with enhanced cooperation in areas such as industrial development, agriculture and IT. He also welcomed Chinese investors to benefit from attractive opportunities in Pakistan.

The two sides discussed the situation in Ukraine and reiterated the need for a solution through sustained dialogue and diplomacy. Prime Minister Imran Khan briefed on India's egregious human rights violations in Indian Illegally Oc-

PICTURE ON PAGE 2

cupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and its irresponsible behaviour that is an impediment to regional peace and security. The Prime Minister also apprised about the so-called "accidental" firing of a missile from India into Pakistan's territory and underlined Pakistan's call for a joint probe, and stressed the need to ensure that it does not occur again. The Prime Minister also emphasized that both countries must continue deeper engagement to promote peace, and stability in Afghanistan and avert the humanitarian crisis there.

'Historic day'; Shahbaz on Broadsheet CEO's apology

SHUJAAT HAMZA/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Following an apology from assets recovery firm Broadsheet's CEO Kaveh Moussavi, PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif said that today is a "very important" day in the history of Pakistan. Addressing a press conference flanked by Ahsan Iqbal and Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Shahbaz said that the head of the British firm has issued an "unconditional apology to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, acknowledging that they did not find a single loose corruption against him". "This is a tight slap on Prime Minister Imran Khan's face," he said, accusing him of pushing the nation into an abyss of poverty and unemployment. Shahbaz, who is also the leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly, said Broadsheet was established during Pervaiz Musharraf's tenure. "...NAB-Niaz nexus along with Shahzad Akbar tried hard to prove corruption against Nawaz Sharif; however, they failed miserably," he added. He questioned where is the joint investigation team

(JIT) held Nawaz accountable. Shahbaz reiterated that nothing has been proved despite 20 years of investigation. The PML-N leader said that the PTI-led government ridiculed, propagandised Nawaz and the party on television; and today everybody witnessed the "drop scene." Earlier, Moussavi had issued a profound apology to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, withdrawing all corruption allegations and for being part of a "witch hunt" that has been running in the name of accountability for over two decades. In an interview, the Broadsheet CEO and former Oxford University associate said he was apologising to Nawaz Sharif to set the record straight that he had not found a "scintilla of evidence" and "not one rupee" during Broadsheet's forensic investigation against Nawaz and his family for over two decades. Last year, Moussavi had won over \$30 million from the government of Pakistan at London High Court after the arbitration judge Sir Anthony's ruling in favour of Moussavi and the same case had cost Pakistan over \$65 million. Moussavi had worked as an international arbitrator at the International Court of Arbitration.

Allies no more with PTI: Moulana Fazl



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman claimed Tuesday the ruling PTI's allies were no more with the government after meeting with MQM-P in the metropolis. Fazl made the announcement during a press conference alongside

Broadsheet apologizes to Nawaz Sharif

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Assets recovery firm Broadsheet's CEO Kaveh Moussavi has issued a profound apology to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, withdrawing all corruption allegations and for being part of a "witch hunt" that has been running in the name of accountability for over two decades. In an exclusive interview with this reporter, the Broadsheet CEO and former Oxford University associate said he was apologising to Nawaz Sharif to set the record straight that he had not found a "scintilla of evidence" and "not one rupee" during Broadsheet's forensic investigation against Nawaz Sharif and his family for over two decades. Last year, Kaveh Moussavi had won over \$30 million from the government of Pakistan at London High Court after the arbitration judge Sir Anthony's ruling in favour of Moussavi and the same case had cost Pakistan over \$65 million. Kaveh Moussavi had worked as an International Arbitrator at the International Court of Arbitration and as an Associate Fellow at the Centre for Socio-Legal Studies at the University and Head of Public Interest Law, Oxford University.

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Briefs

Health Cards Issued in Gujranwala Division

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: National Health Cards issued to all six districts of Gujranwala Division including Gujrat. It is reported that all the Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) of heads of families in the above-mentioned districts were activated as National Health Cards on Monday. The people have expressed their happiness over receiving the health card. It is further reported that 21 hospitals including all the government hospitals will provide free health facilities to the entitled persons worth one million rupees.

Show cause Notices to Sanitary Staff

Deputy Commissioner/Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Dr. Khurram-Shehzad has issued show cause notices to the Sanitary Supervisors and Sanitary Inspectors of the Metropolitan Corporation for showing poor performance. It is reported that on the direction of Chief Minister Punjab, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Khurram-Shehzad along with Chief Officer Metropolitan Corporation QamarZeeshan went out for checking status of sanitation in the area of Alipura Road where there were piles of garbage from the sewerage lines on the road. The sewage was removed and dumped on the sidewalk while sewerage lines were blocked in many places. He expressed his displeasure over the poor sanitation situation in the area and directed the Chief Officer to immediately issue show cause notices to Sanitary Supervisor Mushtaq Butt and Sanitary Inspector Obaidullah and take disciplinary action against them.

AC visits patwar circle at Kharian

ANWAR CHOCHAN

KHARIAN: As per the directions of Punjab Government, Assistant Commissioner Kharian Sajid Munir Kalari laid the foundation stone of 70 rural malls / Patwar Khans at the level of Patwar Circle in Kharian Tehsil. They are supervising the work of decoration and facilities for the people. Provision of all basic amenities has been ensured at these rural malls. In this regard, the Assistant Commissioner today visited and inaugurated Mall Kharian, Dhoria and Lala Musa rural centers.

KP CM felicitates nation on Pakistan Day

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan felicitating the nation on Pakistan Day said that it reminds the historic day when 82 years ago the Muslims of South Asia established an independent Islamic state for themselves. This day reminds us of the great sacrifices made by the founders of Pakistan for the sake of this country and requires us to do collective efforts to make this country a true Islamic state in the world. In his message in connection with Pakistan Day, he said that a long struggle and great sacrifices of the Muslims of the subcontinent resulted in creation of Pakistan where today we are living a free life according to our religious and cultural values. - APP

OIC FMs summit honor for nation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Secretary Information of PML-Q Khawaja Rameez Hassan in a press release said that the visit of OIC foreign ministers and leaders to Pakistan is an honor for the state and a source of pride for the nation. He said that we, as a nation, sincerely welcome all the distinguished guests attending the OIC. He said that Pakistan would uphold the high traditions of hospitality. All political forces, including the opposition, should show patience and diplomatic ethics, he added that no political leadership should sacrifice national interests and honor for personal gain.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign minister of China Wang Yi calls on PM Imran Khan. - DNA

Industrialists reject Octroi tax restoration in KP

The association president also asked the provincial government to avoid taking any such steps, which would cause closure of industries in the province as it would trigger unemployment as a result of stagnation in the industrial sector

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Industrialists here on Tuesday rejected the government's decision regarding restoration of Octroi, a tax on various goods brought into a town, which would be collected on various checkpoints across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and urged the government to revise its decision forthwith.

Chairing a meeting here at Industrial Estate Hayatabad Peshawar on Tuesday, president of Industrialists Association Peshawar (IAP), Malik Imran Ishaq strongly objected the government's decision of re-imposition of 'Mahsul Chungi' system [Octroi], which was unacceptable to them. He said this old and primitive system is a reflection of anti-industrialists, which

had abolished after enormous difficulties being confronted by the business community and huge drawbacks/demerits in it. He informed the FBR is collecting 3 per cent sale tax on the same head, so it would be double taxation as well, while all provinces were also recovering revenue, collected through the same tax from the centre. The association office bear-

ers, renowned industrialists, senior members were present during the meeting. Malik Imran said that the industrial sector has adversely affected by terrorism, followed by the novel coronavirus pandemic, which is yet not fully revived. So, he added, the imposition of the 'MahsulChungi' system would be completely unjust and unfair. He said the government's decision

created unrest among the industrialists. He urged the government to utilize alternative resources for enhancement of provincial revenue instead of restoring the MahsulChungi system. The association president also asked the provincial government to avoid taking any such steps, which would cause closure of industries in the province as it would trigger unemployment as a

result of stagnation in the industrial sector. Malik Imran urged the government to adopt business-friendly policies in order to give relief to Covid-19 hit industries and businesses in the province. He warned that industrialists would be compelled to take harsh steps and strongly agitate as well as approach the court, if the government restored 'MahsulChungi' system as per its plan in the K-P.

Commissioner Multan pays visit to Kehror Pakka

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHARAN: Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmad did a detailed visit of District Lodhran's Tehsil Kehror Pakka, at this time Deputy Commissioner (R) Shoaib Ali, Additional Deputy Commissioner Azoba-Azeem, Assistant Commissioner KehrorPakka Ashraf Saleh along with other concerned officials were there. Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmad during his visit reviewed Basic Health Unit AlipurKanjoo, Rural Treasury Center Alipur Kanjoo, Govt. Boys High School Kehror Pakka, Government Elementary School Chorwah.

DSP pays homage to people, police



GULZAR NOSHI

LALAMUSA: On a peaceful Shab-e-Barat I thank the people, our police officers and employees also played an important role in maintaining law and order. I also pay tribute to him. These views were expressed by DSP Circle Lala Musa Mian Afzal Shah while talking to the media. Discussing further, he said that there was peace in Circle Lala Musa regarding fireworks and the citizens showed exemplary cooperation. With the cooperation of the police and the people, no untoward incident took place. We pay tribute to the SHOs of all the police stations and their subordinates and pay special tribute to the people. They fully cooperated in maintaining law and order.

Netherlands to help in farm sector reorganization



ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Ambassador of kingdom of Netherlands Wouter Plomf Tuesday said after coronavirus pandemic, Pakistani and Dutch companies had started contacting each other which would not only help increase the volume of bilateral trade but also play a major role in reorganising agriculture on scientific lines in Pakistan. Addressing the business community at the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), he said that Netherlands was a small country compared to Pakistan, but it is the second

largest agriculture exporting country in the world only due to its technological expertise. He said that many Dutch companies were already working in Pakistan, while more were contemplating to launch their projects as vast tracts of land and cheap labour were available here in Pakistan. He said that Holland could help Pakistan in the development of its dairy sector in addition to producing high yielding potato seeds. He said that Pakistan has a very proactive commercial section in Hague and it could help Pakistani exporters in organising textile exhibitions in the Netherlands in

addition to arranging direct meetings with the Dutch investors for launching joint ventures with technology transfer and branding. He said that the Netherlands has already collaborated with Engro Foods for the production of a wide range of value-added agriculture products. He said that a dairy factory has been established in Sahiwal which is collecting milk from the catchment area in a most safe and scientific manner. He said that Pakistan is discouraging imports by enhancing regulatory duties and hence Dutch companies would prefer to establish their units in Pakistan.

Pakistan Navy seizes narcotics in a joint operation at sea

NEWS DESK

KARACHI: In an intelligence based joint operation at Sea Pakistan Navy and office of Customs collectorate Gwadar seized approximately 3000 Kgs narcotics at sea off Balochistan Coast. Afterward the seized narcotics valued nearing 750 million ru-

pees was handed over to customs for further legal proceedings. The successful execution of Intelligence based joint Operation is a demonstration of Pakistan Navy's resolve to deter and disrupt illegal activities in maritime zone of Pakistan. Pakistan Navy will continue to should its national obligations and determined to ensure maritime security and order at sea.



23 March
PAKISTAN RESOLUTION DAY

On the happy occasion of Pakistan Day, I extend my heartiest felicitations to all citizens of Pakistan. 23rd March is a landmark in the glorious history of Pakistan. On this very day, the Muslims of the subcontinent for the first time formally articulated their demand for a homeland of their own. On the strength of their unity and indomitable will, they eventually realized their dream of Pakistan under the inspiring leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Certainly, Pakistan Day is a symbol and reminder of the determination, sacrifice and epic struggle of our forefathers for independence.

My Dear Countrymen! This year, Pakistan Day has special significance, as the Nation witnesses the newly-inducted J-10C aircraft on the wing during Pakistan Day Parade, symbolising PAF's modernisation strategy. Let me assure you that we are continuously endeavouring to augment our potential in all spectrums. Our prime focus remains on Modernization through indigenization as well as collaboration with friendly countries. To this end, PAF continues to harness new technologies like Stand Off Weapons, Precision Munition, Electronic Warfare, Unmanned Aerial Systems and Artificial Intelligence. Alhamdulillah! We have made good progress in enhancing our capability in Space and Cyber domains in line with the dictates of Modern Non-Contact Warfare. The absorption of these cutting-edge niche technologies is made possible through focused Training and Human Resource Development. I am glad that through Triple Helix Model of Innovation, major strides have been made in Aerospace Industry, Academia and Government Linkages. I am sure that these initiatives would pay dividends in the times ahead. Let us resolve on this day that we will not rest on our laurels but will redouble our efforts for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan, as indeed the development of Pakistan Air Force. On this historic occasion, we also reiterate support to Kashmiri brethren in their just struggle for self-determination.

Let us bow our heads before Allah in humility for his benevolence, seeking strength and guidance to be the enduring guardians of Pakistan's free blue skies, Aameen.

Pakistan Air Force Zindabaad!
Pakistan Paindabaad!

Air Chief Marshal
Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M)
Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force

PAKISTAN AIR FORCE
A SYMBOL OF PRIDE FOR THE NATION

PID (I) 6715/21

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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- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister of Azerbaijan, Deputy Foreign Minister and embassy staff paying respected to the National leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev. – DNA

Wang Yi's participation in OIC moot welcomed

Mushahid says Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-China 'strategic triangle' has key role in new emerging order in Muslim world

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To coincide with the OIC Foreign Ministers Conference in Islamabad, which witnessed a historic first with the keynote speech from China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, the Islamabad-based think tank, Pakistan-China Institute (PCI), held a special Webinar that welcomed China's participation in the OIC and discussed how the Chinese system had delivered for their people, ranging from poverty alleviation to good governance. The Webinar, which was held under the banner of the "Friends of Silk Road", with the theme of "Whole Process People's Democracy: Understanding the Chinese System", started with opening remarks by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Chairman, Pa-



kistan-China Institute and Senate Defence Committee, in which he welcomed China's participation in OIC as an "historic first", where China's entry into the Muslim world coincides with America's exit, with US retrenchment being witnessed from Southwest Asia and the Middle East.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed also welcomed the close coordination between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, enabling the invitation to China in the OIC, which was in recognition of China's longstanding relationship and support to the Muslim World, adding that Pakistan-Saudi Arabia close

collaboration was reminiscent of the brotherly bond between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia that enabled the first successful OIC Summit in Pakistan at Lahore in 1974. In the context of changing geopolitics, Senator Mushahid Hussain said that China is emerging as a key player in the Muslim

world and this role is being enhanced also due to its ties with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He lauded the strategic shift in Saudi Arabia's policies, both domestic and foreign, especially liberalization and opening up in Saudi society, economy, culture, plus policies curbing religious extrem-

ism and promotion of women's rights, as well as improvement in Saudi Arabia relations with Iran and Turkey. Senator Mushahid Hussain saw the emergence of a "strategic triangle" between Pakistan, China and Saudi Arabia, which can play a pivotal role in strengthening unity, economic development and connectivity in the Muslim world. He said the strategic shift in Saudi Arabia was due to the enlightened leadership of Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (MBS) and there were now even discussions between Saudi Arabia and China for selling oil in RMB, the Chinese currency, instead of the US dollar, while in the summer of 2022, President Xi Jinping was likely to visit Saudi Arabia and the Saudi Crown Prince MBS was likely to visit Pakistan.

Kyrgyz FM meets COAS Bajwa, desires to enhance bilateral ties

RAWALPINDI: Foreign Minister of Republic of Kyrgyzstan Ruslan Kazakbaev Tuesday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa here at GHQ where both reiterated the desire to further enhance bilateral relations including efforts for peace and security in the region. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including military to military relations, regional security situation and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. Referring to OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers session, COAS termed it a historic development for addressing the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and bringing international community to a shared vision and joint strategy to find solution to emerging challenges in the region vital for peace and stability. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role regional stability and pledged to play his role for further improvements in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels. He specially appreciated Pakistan's efforts for hosting the OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers. – DNA

COMSTech organizes workshop on Cancer Genetics

ISLAMABAD: A 3-day online workshop on Cancer Genetics organized jointly by COMSTech, International Centre for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), and Sindh Innovation Research and Education Network during March 21, 22, and 24, 2022 at Latif Ebrahim Jamal National Science Information Center (ICCBS) University of Karachi. The workshop consists upon lectures by renowned expert Prof. Dr. Rafat Ali Siddiqui Senior Investigator at the Methodist Research Institute, and Professor of Cel-

lular Biochemistry, Indiana University School of Medicine, USA. Each lecture followed by extensive exercises and discussion sessions. Fundamentals of cancers, oncogenes, anti-oncogenes, epigenetics, miRNA and cancer genes regulation, and diet and cancer were the topic taught by Prof. Rafat during the workshop. He said two major causes of death in the world are cardiovascular disease and cancer. He said the number one cause of cancer is tobacco, and mentioned that tobacco does not only cause the lung cancer but it also causes cancer of different other organs. He said the obesity is the second cause of cancer because lots of fat deposits in body serve as reservoir for inflammatory cells which leads to cancer. The pathogens are the third cause of cancer. Life style, diet, occupational exposure, alcohol, reproductive factors, and ultraviolet radiation are other causes of cancer. – DNA

Pakistan Day message from Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI(M)

ON THE happy occasion of Pakistan Day, I extend my heartfelt felicitations to all citizens of Pakistan. 23rd March is a landmark in the glorious history of Pakistan. On this very day, the Muslims of the subcontinent for the first time formally articulated their demand for a homeland of their own. On the strength of their unity and indomitable will, they eventually realized their dream of Pakistan under the inspiring leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. Certainly, Pakistan Day is a symbol and reminder of the determination, sacrifice and epic struggle of our forefathers for independence. My Dear Countrymen! This year, Pakistan Day has special significance, as the Nation witnesses the newly-inducted J-10C aircraft on the wing during Pakistan Day Parade, symbolising PAF's modernisation strategy. Let me assure you that we are continuously endeavouring to augment our potential in all spectrums. Our prime focus remains on Modernization through indigenization as well as collaboration with friendly countries. To this end, PAF continues to harness new technologies like Stand Off Weapons, Precision Munition, Electronic Warfare, Unmanned Aerial Systems and Artificial Intelligence. Alhamdulillah! We have made good progress in enhancing our capability in Space and Cyber domains in line with the dictates of Modern Non-Contact Warfare. The absorption of these cutting-edge niche technologies is made possible through focused Training and Human Resource Development.



I am glad that through Triple Helix Model of Innovation, major strides have been made in Aerospace Industry, Academia and Government Linkages. I am sure that these initiatives would pay dividends in the times ahead. Let us resolve on this day that we will not rest on our laurels but will redouble our efforts for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan, as indeed the development of Pakistan Air Force. On this historic occasion, we also reiterate support to Kashmiri brethren in their just struggle for self-determination. Let us bow our heads before Allah in humility for his benevolence, seeking strength and guidance to be the enduring guardians of Pakistan's free blue skies, Aameen. Pakistan Air Force Zindabaad! Pakistan Paindabaad!

"Urdu Ki Khas Kitab" launched at PAC

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council launches third edition of Mushtaq Ahmed Sehar's special book "Urdu Ki Khas Kitaab" in collaboration with Voice of writers. Prof. Majid Shah presided over the function, while Prof. Sabin Younis and Ashfaq Hussain Bukhari participated in the function as special guests. Imtiaz A. Qureshi officiated at the function. While addressing the occasion, Prof. Majid Shah said that comic literature is a necessity in today's world. Mushtaq Ahmad Sehar has written fascinating humorous essays on various topics in the midst of the bitterness of the present situation and the atmosphere of invisible harassment. Essential rules serve as pillars for the creative use of humor, which cannot be ignored in spite of all modernity. In spite of all these innovations which cannot be ignored, quality of humor, eloquence and humility in metaphorical style are very important. Founder of Voice of Writers Obaid Bazigh Amr, founder of Voice of Reuters, said that we are writing sad literature in the guise of serious literature and that too with non-seriousness. Mushtaq Sehar is aware of the tradition of humorous writing. If modern writers are using the tactic of mockery then our society is also responsible for it. Our social system is ridiculous. In the famine of comedians, Sahar Sahib is like an invaluable personality. Obaid Bazigh Amr, Ms. Farkhunda Shamim, Ali Aryan Kayani, Ms. Sabah Kazmi, Ms. Fatima Usman, Ms. Maafia Sheikh, Mr. Mazhar Rizvi and Mr. Atif Mirza read out the essays written on the special topic of the book. – APP

Preparations for Pakistan Day Parade finalized

ISLAMABAD: The nation will celebrate the 82nd Pakistan Day with full zeal and fervour Wednesday as the preparations for the Pakistan Day Parade in the Federal Capital to show the country's military prowess and cultural diversity are in full swing. The joint services parade will include contingents of the tri-services, paramilitary forces and civil armed forces whereas troops from friendly countries will also participate. The parade will also include the troops of Armoured Corps, Artillery, and Air Defence Engineers, which will be equipped with awe-inspiring weapons whereas missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) will also be part of it as a symbol of Pakistan's invincible defence. One of the important highlights of this year's Pakistan Day Parade will be the fly-past of the most modern J10-C fighter jets, besides the aviation flypast. – APP

A Resolution of Fortitude, Patience and Sacrifice that changed the course of HISTORY

PAKISTAN NAVY PAYS TRIBUTE TO THE DETERMINATION & STEADFASTNESS OF OUR FOREFATHERS FOR STANDING COURAGEOUSLY BEHIND THIS GREAT RESOLUTION. ON THIS DAY, PAKISTAN NAVY REAFFIRMS THE RESOLVE TO CONTRIBUTE EFFECTIVELY FOR DEFENCE OF THE MOTHERLAND.

DEFENDERS OF MARITIME FRONTIERS OF PAKISTAN

Multi Dimensional Force

Briefs

Courageous leader of Ummah calls for unity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said on Tuesday that Imran Khan, the courageous leader of the Muslim Ummah PM Khan, during his address to the meeting of OIC Foreign Ministers Council, called for unity and joint efforts of 57 Islamic countries of the world to tackle the challenges.

In a tweet, Farrukh remarked that the PM bluntly said that 1.5 billion Muslims of the world should show their strength for peace instead of getting entangled in divisions and conflicts.

Minister appreciates ADB's loan for Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan Tuesday appreciated the approval of \$300 million by Asian Development Bank under Capital Market Development Program (SP-2). This program aims to support demand and supply measures to broaden and deepen the financial system in Pakistan with strong legal and regulatory framework.

In his tweet the minister also commended the support of ADB and efforts of Pakistan Executive Director at ADB, Noor Ahmed, EAD, and ministry of finance for successful completion of reforms under CMDP(SP-2) for \$300 million.

It will help mobilize financial resources for productive investment, especially by pvt sector, and facilitate economic growth by developing the bond & equity capital markets, he said adding that it would also help to improve forex reserves and stabilize exchange rate.

Earlier, the ADB had approved on Tuesday, a \$300 million loan to further develop Pakistan's capital markets, promote private investment in the country, and help to mobilize domestic resources to finance sustainable growth. - APP

PSX loses 26 points

ISLAMABAD: The KSE 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed slight bearish trend on Tuesday, losing 26.43 points, with a negative change of 0.06 percent, closing at 42,203.79 points against 42,230.22 points on the last working day. A total of 138,281,102 shares were traded during the day compared to the trade of 124,946,353 shares the previous day whereas the price of shares stood at Rs5.005 billion against Rs3.934 billion on last trading day.

As many as 320 companies transacted shares in the stock market, 155 of them recorded gain and 143 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 22 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Treet Corp with a volume of 15,350,000 shares and price per share of Rs30.07, TPL Properties XB with a volume of 8,380,315 and price per share of Rs 17.88 and Pak Elektron (R) with volume of 7,358,500 and price per share of Rs1.00. - APP

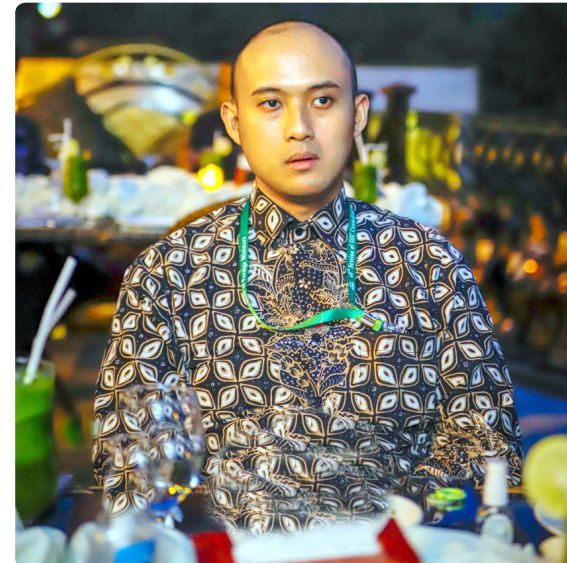
ANF recovers 39,600kg drugs

ISLAMABAD: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Intelligence and ANF Quetta held a joint operation and recovered 39,600kg of hashish from two female members of the inter-provincial drug trafficking gang.

According to ANF spokesman, the two women were arrested from a passenger bus near Khanozai Tehsil in Pishin District. A total of 39,600kg hashish was recovered from the personal possession and belongings of the accused.

The accused included MehrMahosh, a resident of Pishin and Rehana Yasmeen, from Rahim Yar Khan. The two women were smuggling drugs from Pishin to Faisalabad. A case has been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation was underway. - APP

INDONESIA DELEGATION AT MONAL



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Indonesia, which is in Pakistan to attend the OIC conference enjoying Monal delicacies. - DNA

Pakistan on road to prosperity: NA Speaker

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser and Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri here on Tuesday said that the country is on the road to development and prosperity due to successful policies of the incumbent government. In their separate messages on the occasion of Pakistan Day, they said that by awakening the spirit of 1940, people can overcome the current challenges faced by the country. On this occasion, the Speaker said that the day of March 23 reminds, the nation about the resolution on the basis of which the Muslims of the subcontinent struggled hard to achieve the dream of a separate homeland. Asad said that hard work and honesty would pave the country on the road to progress and prosperity.

The speaker said that the sacrifices of the Muslims who participated in Tehreek-e-Pakistan would always be remembered. He said that it was the sincere spirit of the Muslims that led to the resolution passed in Lahore on March 23, 1940, which was named as Pakistan Resolution. He said that it was the resolution and struggle of Quaid E-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah that within a short span of 7 years Pakistan emerged on the map of the world.

The Speaker said that today is the day of renewed commitment that whenever hard times befall the country we will never hesitate to lay down our lives. He urged all political parties to shun their differences and work together for the betterment of the country. On this occasion, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri said that this day reminds people of Pakistan of the tireless efforts of the Muslims of the sub-continent to achieve Pakistan, due to which nation is enjoying freedom and independence. He said that the sacrifices made for the sake of Pakistan would always be remembered. - APP

Nation stands firmly with PM against corruption

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for State on Parliamentary Affairs Ali Muhammad Khan on Tuesday said the whole nation was standing behind Prime Minister Imran Khan against the corrupt elements and supporting his struggle to root out this menace. Imran Khan was fighting for the nation and all those who looted the country in past many decade will be held accountable across the board, he said while talking to a private news channel.

He said opposition's attempt of no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan would be failed badly as all allies were with the government and disintegrated members would also rejoin the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He said PTI government would not only fulfill its constitutional tenure but would also form next government with two third majority on the basis of performance. Ali Muhammad said PTI to hold its public rally under the law of land.

All set to celebrate Mar 23

RAWALPINDI: All preparations have been finalized here to celebrate Pakistan Day in a befitting manner as the nation is preparing for the day celebrated across the country to mark the passing of the Lahore Resolution, when a separate nation for the Muslims of the British Indian Empire was demanded on March 23, 1940 in Lahore. Elaborated arrangements were underway to celebrate the day with great national zeal and patriotic spirit. As the Pakistan Day holds a significant place in the history of Pakistan and to mark it in a befitting manner, Armed Forces were busy in rehearsals and drills at 'Shakarparian' parade ground to celebrate the day in a spectacular way. Armed forces troops and other departments were busy in rehearsals and making other administrative arrangements for the day, to be observed in dignified and respectful manner on March 23. - APP

China enterprises' intent to be aware of Pak laws intensifies

Pak has bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with several nations and is a member of WTO, South Asia Free Trade Area and has a free trade agreement with China

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: With the deepening of the construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and the strengthening of economic and trade exchanges between China and Pakistan, more and more Chinese enterprises are coming to the Pakistani market to develop their business, according to the report published by Gwadar Pro. To improve efficiency and reduce unnecessary trouble, it is imperative for Chinese enterprises

to understand Pakistan's economic environment and legal framework.

Under the support of the All-Pakistan Chinese Enterprises' Association, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd Karachi Branch organized an online lecture on Legal Overview of Pakistan by Ziad Munawar Shaikh, senior legal adviser of ICBC Karachi Branch. About 80 representatives of China-funded enterprises attended the lecture and their questions on the contract law and other issues were answered on the occasion.

Pakistan is a parliamentary democracy with a federal system of government. Legislative competence and executive authority with respect to various subjects are split between the federation and the provinces. Mr. Munawar Shaikh explained that the country has a bicameral federal legislature, known as the Parliament or Majlis-e-Shoora, comprising the National Assembly and the Senate, whereas the provincial legislatures (known as the provincial assemblies) are unicameral. An Act of Parliament (i.e.

any legislation) must be passed by a quorum in both houses of Parliament (i.e. Senate and National Assembly) and receive the President of Pakistan's assent. Pakistan has bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with several nations and is a member of WTO, South Asia Free Trade Area and has a free trade agreement with China. Its exports include textiles, rice, sugar, leather goods, rice, cement, and fruit and vegetables. The government is making it an investment-friendly

destination. "All sectors of the economy, except arms and ammunition, nuclear energy, currency and security printing and mint are open to foreign investors. There is no maximum cap on the shareholding that may be held by foreign investors except in certain sectors including commercial aviation, and print and electronic media." Mr. Ziad Munawar Shaikh introduced. He also gave answers to the tax issues that apply to cross-border or foreign-owned businesses and investors. "For tax purposes, locals and foreigners are treated alike. Equity investments made by foreign investors are subject to withholding tax on dividends and profit on debt. Dividends payable to foreign shareholders of Pakistani companies are subject to withholding tax on dividends. Similarly, profit on a debt payable to foreign investors is subject to withholding tax. The rate of corporate tax imposed on the taxable income of a company (other than a banking company) is currently 35 percent."

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ISLAMABAD: Furqat Sidiq Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan presenting a souvenir to Speakers National Assembly Asad Qaiser. - DNA

OIC urged to help move ICJ for war crimes in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Organization of Kashmir Coalition (OKC) on Tuesday urged the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to help move Int'l Court of Justice (ICJ) for war crimes and investigate mass and unknown graves in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In a letter to the OIC's Secretary-General, Ambassador Houssein Ibrahim Taha, the OKC leaders Prof Nazir Ahmed Shawl and Barrister A Majid Trambo welcomed the 48th Session of the CFM of OIC in Islamabad. Recognising that OIC has always advocated Sawt-AHikmah (voice of wisdom), through Centre for Dialogue, Peace and Understanding. However, they regretted that the government of India continued to formulate and execute extremist policies in the occupied territory. The OKC leaders urged OIC to refer and file, through one of its member states, with the ICJ the crime of genocide in IIOJK against all the perpetrators who have acted or act at the behest of Indian government. They said, OKC has accumulated substantial evidence on the crime of genocide against the people of IIOJK and said OIC has the duty to prevent genocide and the responsibility to protect Kashmiris under the international law. They highlighted the atrocities those are being encountered by ordinary Kashmiris for peace and human rights in their day-to-day life including lockdowns particularly from 5 August 5, 2019 when the Indian government abrogated the articles 35(A) & 370 of its own constitution and which extended special status to Jammu & Kashmir recognising the state being a disputed territory pursuant to the UN mandate. - DNA

Seminar on CPEC opportunities for youth held

"With the progress of the second phase of CPEC, trade cooperation between China and Pakistan will continue to show the momentum of rapid development"

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: To inspire the younger generation in Pakistan to learn more about China and CPEC, the Confucius Institute at Punjab University joined hand with Carrer Counseling Centre, Government Graduate College Township (GC Township) Lahore to hold a seminar themed "CPEC Opportunities For Youth". On the occasion, according to Gwadar Pro, CaiJinbao, Chinese director of CIPU highlighted that it is imperative for Pakistani friends to learn Chinese as Chi-

na-Pakistan exchanges are increasing day by day.

"With the progress of the second phase of CPEC, trade cooperation between China and Pakistan will continue to show the momentum of rapid development. The growth will be accompanied by the demand for language talents, and those who master Chinese will undoubtedly gain an edge in the market."

Mr. Cai added that in the field of culture and education, China-Pakistan cooperation is also increasing. "Currently, five Confucius Institutes and two Confucius Classrooms have been established

in Pakistan. Combined with the scholarships provided by both governments for those who pursue further study in China, the number of Pakistani students studying in China is quite large. Statistics in 2018 showed that Pakistan ranks third in the world in the number of international students studying in China, with a total of more than 28,000."

In his speech, Dr. Muhammad Ljaz Butt, Principal of GC Township, lauded CPEC for its remarkable achievements in energy, transportation, ports, agriculture, health, education, environment, and other fields related to the national

economy and people's livelihood, and underlined that he was very proud to be a citizen of Pakistan. He called on the younger generation of Pakistan to bear in mind the help of the Chinese government and people, actively learn the Chinese language and culture, participate in CPEC construction and contribute to the China-Pakistan friendship.

Waheed Dhakku, CEO of Global Education without Border Services, Lahore who is also a Chinese teacher currently, and Mr. Dilawar Chaudhary, Chief Editor of Nawaiwaqt Epaper, said that they have benefited a lot from the

philosophical wisdom of ancient Chinese classics, and hoped that the young people present could also learn Chinese and seize the golden opportunity.

More than 100 teachers and students attended the seminar. And Mr. Cai answered questions raised by Pakistani students on how to learn the Chinese language and culture efficiently, how to apply for study in China, how to take the HSK exam, etc.

The students present expressed their willingness to study in China to further improve their Chinese proficiency and understand more Chinese culture.

OIC for Afghanistan

A CHARTER to establish a Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan was signed by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Islamic Development Bank. The signing ceremony, held in Pakistan's capital Islamabad. The bank will serve as a vehicle to channel humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, including in partnership with other international actors. Nearly two-thirds of Afghanistan's population – about 23 million people – need urgent humanitarian assistance. That's up 30% from one year ago. The World Food Program says 9 million Afghans are just one step away from famine. The Taliban's seizure of power and the withdrawal of U.S.-led international forces led to an immediate suspension of international financial assistance to the aid-dependent country. Billions of dollars in Afghan central bank assets, mostly held in the U.S., have also been frozen. The freezing of Afghan assets and imposition of banking sanctions have worsened the country's humanitarian crisis, stemming from years of war and persistent drought. Recognition of the Afghan interim government by the entire world is essential for the establishment of lasting peace in Afghanistan, tackling the economic crisis and development. Peace and stability in Afghanistan is important not only for the countries of the region but for the whole world. If instability spreads in Afghanistan, it will have a negative impact on the whole world. Sanctions on banking channels in Afghanistan are harmful. Central Asian countries, SAARC, ASEAN, Russia and China should put pressure on US to lift restrictions on banking channels in Afghanistan. Under such circumstances, the establishment of the OIC Humanitarian Fund for Afghanistan is the first step towards a prosperous Afghanistan.

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Political chaos

WHILE the National Assembly session has finally been summoned by Speaker Asad Qaiser on March 25, the opposition is up in arms over the delay – for which the speaker has used a rare constitutional provision – saying that per the constitution, the session should have been summoned on March 21 given the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan. Things have reached Article 6 level threats by the opposition against the speaker, if he keeps using what they say are delaying tactics. Unpacking the nuances of the no-confidence back and forth between the government and the opposition is best left to legal minds but on the face of it it seems the government is trying to buy some time in light of the presidential reference about the defection clause, seeking clarity on Article 63(A) from the Supreme Court. In a Supreme Court hearing – on a plea by the Supreme Court Bar Association, seeking SC's intervention in preventing anarchy ahead of the no-confidence vote – the SCBA had argued that the right to vote should not be infringed upon. The next hearing regarding the presidential reference on Article 63(A) is set to take place on March 24, and will hopefully clarify the defection clause question. Most legal experts believe that the defection clause only comes into play once the vote has been cast and that intentions of parliamentarians cannot lead to disqualification. Chief Justice Umar Atta Bandial seemed to echo similar sentiments on Monday, saying that the court would not wish to interfere in the National Assembly's affairs but would want that no one's right to vote be affected. With all the confusion going on, this political chaos doesn't seem to end anywhere in near future.

Permissible mainstream financial solutions

Dr. Abdus Sattar Abbasi

High net worth individuals (HNWIs) usually seek opportunities for investment in small but promising businesses to expand their hard-earned fortune. These HNWIs are known as 'angel investors'. These self-made angel investors bring wealth of knowledge and expertise, along with liquid money, out of their successful careers. Therefore, angel investors prefer to invest in businesses with which they are either familiar or had first-hand experience in the past or they might had academic training in the particular sector

IT was January 2007 when we checked in at Dushanbe International Airport (DYU) Tajikistan, passengers were asked to proceed to the departure lounge according to the schedule but later flight departure was announced delayed. DYU was a moderate airport in terms of facilities; initially it was fine but with the passage of time people started to pick refreshments from a tiny snack shop in the departure lounge, which I couldn't because I was not expecting that much delay in the departure. It was bit tense to bear with hunger after more than six hours of delay, when one of my acquaintances from

Indian pharmaceutical company came to me and said that he has enough rajma which he can share with us. We knew each other well so I instantly replied that I eat Halal, he responded don't you remember I am staunch vegetarian; thus I agreed to join him and to my surprise rajma turned to be red kidney beans with gravy which we used to call surkhlobia (red beans), we enjoyed the feast to the fullest. Anyhow, the purpose of sharing this incidence is that there are several permissible solutions in the mainstream of the life which comply with Shariah requirements and finance is not an exception.

We are developing a parallel system of Islamic financial institutions with a framework which is still not acceptable to all schools of thoughts. It is indeed remarkable to endeavour for a complete separate structure of Islamic banking and finance, which is growing slowly but surely. However, in this quest we are probably ignoring some quite potential opportunities to broaden the horizon of Shariah compliant financial solutions. Clutches of interest have deprived millions from their fair right of progress and prosperity. Every wave of depression indicates that it is interest based financial system which squeezes opportunities of equitable and sustainable human prosperity. Movements such as socially responsible investing, environmental, social and governance (ESG) models and ethical finance share several fundamental values with Islamic finance, only little adjustments can make these initiatives Shariah compliant.

Current framework for Shariah compliant business operations allows 37% interest bearing debt to asset ratio, 33% non-Shariah compliant investments to total asset ratio and 5% non-Shariah compliant income to total revenue along with scheme of purifying through charity. Fundamental condition remains that core business should not violate any principle of Shariah. The ratio of illiquid assets to total assets should be at least 25% while market price per share should be at least equal to or greater than net liquid assets per share. This 37, 33, 5 and 25 provide a huge window to accommodate conventional modes of financing and investment for business organizations ignoring some promising mainstream permissible financial solutions.

In finance leverage means the amount of debt a firm uses; zero-leverage means zero long-term debt while

almost zero-leverage means less than 5% book leverage. There is abundance of such firms working in the mainstream with zero or almost zero-leverage. A study found more than 32% large public nonfinancial firms in America with zero or almost zero-leverage from 1962 to 2009. According to the same study, "Zero-leverage behaviour is a persistent phenomenon. Dividend-paying zero-leverage firms pay substantially higher dividends, are more profitable, pay higher taxes, issue less equity, and have higher cash balances." Promoting zero-leverage behaviour among business organizations is one of the options as a permissible financial strategy.

In the aftermath of World War II when global financial health was facing challenges, venture capital emerged as a viable financing solution for budding entrepreneurs with strong potential of growth. Startups generally face difficulties in finding monetary resources due to their neonatal operating history. Therefore, to realise their dreams they usually rely on venture capital, in exchange of equity in the firm, both in terms of monetary and non-monetary resources including technical &/ managerial expertise. This whole concept is close to the concept of Mudarabah, a Shariah compliant financial contract, in which one party contributes financial resources and called as 'rabal-maal' and the other an entrepreneur. Mudarabah provides both options to the rabal-maal as absolutely silent contributor of finance for the business enterprise and also the combination of finance and technical &/ managerial contributions; contract is customised according to the nature of the agreement. Over the years venture capital gained huge significance in the business world; in 2021 venture capital contributed 330 billion dollars of financing in United States of America alone. Venture capital is already shaping up as an institution with number of firms operating around the globe with more than a dozen in Pakistan. These firms have scientifically developed a mechanism of due diligence of business proposals before investing in the business. Opting venture capital as an investment option certainly has a bright track record such as sparkling success stories of Intel and Apple; however around 30-40% startups fail completely while 10-20% witness substantial success.

High net worth individuals (HNWIs) usually seek opportunities for investment in small but promising businesses to expand their hard-earned fortune. These HNWIs are known as 'angel investors'. These self-made angel investors bring wealth of knowledge and expertise, along with liquid money, out of their successful careers. Therefore, angel investors prefer to invest in businesses with which they are either familiar or had first-hand experience in the past or they might had academic training in the particular sector. Angel investors prefer to invest through their acquaintances to provide cushion to the associated risk with the investment. Angel investors are becoming important part of overall emerging permissible mainstream financing and investment ecosystem in existing economic landscape.

Crowdfunding is another mainstream permissible financial solution for startups in particular and growing businesses in general, besides, crowdfunding also provides an opportunity for altruistic initiatives for those segments of the society which are deeply linked with the folk culture of a society but usually face financial challenges such as artists and writers. Crowdfunding is also a very good tool to assist serious illnesses of disadvantaged segment of the society. However, it is equally an effective financial solution for new business ventures. There are some popular crowdfunding platforms which facilitate new ventures where they pitch their idea or business plan in front of large and diverse group of investors to collect small amounts from every participating investor/donor to accumulate hundreds and millions of dollars of funding with different modes of return from equity participation to complimentary advance units of the product or service. Although crowdfunding is not legal in Pakistan but it has been regulated and legally allowed in many advanced countries because of its usefulness in establishing new businesses.

It will be an added advantage if an individual or an organization aspiring to utilise these financial solutions can manage to sign the contract as mudarabah, musharakah, murabahah or tabarru according to the nature of the deal.

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Thank you Jinnah

AS Pakistan prepares to celebrate the 82nd anniversary of Lahore Resolution, it is vital to shed light on the event that changed the course of history in the subcontinent. As "Magna Carta" laid the foundation stone of people's power in Great Britain, the pledge made on 23rd March 1940 at the erstwhile Minto Park, for decades, serves as a cornerstone for Pakistan's socio-political culture. The Nation must utilize this moment to revisit the ideology and thought behind the historic resolution. 23rd March, revives the essence of nationalism among common people of Pakistan. As we breathe in a free country today, tribute must be paid to the ones who sacrificed their present for us. On this historic day, the Nation must be reminded of Quaid's words that defined the purpose and meaning of Pakistan. This article reproduces the most relevant quotes of the presidential address of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah at the Lahore session of All India Muslim League that carved out an independent homeland for the Muslims of South Asia. As the events highlighting bigotry and communalism unfold across the border, the Pakistani nation stands indebted to the vision and foresight of its founding fathers. The Quaid said, "You may remember that we appointed a committee of ladies at the Patna Session (1938). It is of very great importance to us, because I believe that it is of absolutely essential for us to give every opportunity to our women to participate in our struggle of life and death." The opening remarks of Quaid's most important address advocated women's rights. He emphasized the essentiality of women's participation in the socio-political struggle and highlighted their achievements in the upbringing of All India Muslim League. Following the footsteps of the founding father, the Pakistan's Armed Forces have significantly contributed in uplifting the slogan of women empowerment by inducting Pakistani women in various fields including medical, education and technical branches of the Tri-services.

Pakistani women in uniform has contributed a lot in service to the country. The first ever Pakistani Female Engagement team in any United Nations (UN) mission around the world received UN medals for serving in the Peacekeeping Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo last year. A team of 15 Pakistani women officers, received major recognition for being the first all-female group from Pakistan to serve in a UN peacekeeping mission. This service abroad for peacekeeping missions brought an immense respect to Pakistan at the global level.

At the same occasion, the Quaid further stated that, "We want that the British Government should in fact and actually meet the demands of the Arabs in Palestine." Muhammad Ali Jinnah backed the plight of Palestinians eight decades ago. In his all-important address, he did not forget to show solidarity with Palestinian brethren. To date, Pakistan's stance on Palestine is unchanged. On many occasions, PM Khan advocated a Two-State solution according to the aspiration and wishes of the people of Palestine. Pakistan should continue its unequivocal diplomatic support to the cause and must attempt to mobilize Muslim Ummah to resolve the crisis which has brought enormous pain to the people of Palestine.

Jinnah reiterated, "Musalmans are not a minority. The Musalmans are a nation by any definition. We find out that even according to the British map of India we occupy large parts of this country, where the Musalmans are in a majority" Citing the work of London Times and the letter of LalaLajpat Rai to C.R Das, Quaid stressed on the separate identity of Muslims of the Subcontinent. He validated the 'Two Nation Theory' and presented colonialism with a workable solution to maintain peace in the Subcontinent.

Jinnah was well aware of the fact that Pakistan's due to its peculiar geostrategic location and the hostile neighboring environment needs strong Armed Forces to protect its national interests. Among the Tri-Services, Pakistan Navy was thus

designated as an instrument to defend the maritime frontiers and interests of Pakistan. During wartimes, Pakistan Navy has always espoused high standards of professionalism and valour. In 1965 war, Operation "Dwarka" launched by Pakistan Navy caused irreparable damage to Indian Navy, vehemently destroyed the Indian Radar system. In addition, Pakistan Navy's submarine Ghazi moved its patrol to Bombay harbor to challenge enemy's ships namely INS Vikrant and INS Mysore to dock out and get destroyed. This psychological fear of Ghazi adversely affected the Indian Navy's operational maneuvers. Yet again in the 1971 war, sinking of Indian warship Kukri brought an immense wartime casualty by PNS Hangor, is the only incident after WWII wherein any conventional submarine sank a Warship. Furthermore, the detections of Indian Navy submarine, after Pulwama military standoff, by Pakistan Navy evidently portrays its effective employment strategy coupled with superior professional acumen.

Recent developments and reports of subjugation and ill treatment of Muslims coming out of India validate Muhammad Ali Jinnah's address at the Lahore Session of All India Muslim League. Quaid remarked, "Muslim India cannot accept any constitution which must necessarily result in a Hindu majority government. Hindus and Muslims brought together under a democratic system forced upon the minorities can only mean Hindu Raj." The prediction of our visionary founding father made eight decades ago stands relevant and applicable today. In post-1947 India, it was evident that Nehru's sugar-coated secular democracy was bound to collapse one day or another. Today, from revocation of Article 370 and Citizenship Amendment Act to Ayodhya Verdict, each development embosses Jinnah's words. This is what a Hindu Raj forced upon Muslims looks like. As renowned Indian author Arundhati Roy said, "Modi had been coming since 1925." Nehru's deodorized democracy was destined to fall apart and Gandhi's India was doomed to become Godse's India.

Ali Basit

Jinnah reiterated, "Musalmans are not a minority. The Musalmans are a nation by any definition. We find out that even according to the British map of India we occupy large parts of this country, where the Musalmans are in a majority" Citing the work of London Times and the letter of LalaLajpat Rai to C.R Das, Quaid stressed on the separate identity of Muslims of the Subcontinent. He validated the 'Two Nation Theory' and presented colonialism with a workable solution to maintain peace in the Subcontinent

Briefs

Highlights of 48th OIC-CFM inaugural session

FROM PAGE 01

— Pakistan FM started his speech at 1136 hours while underscoring the need of unity to synergize scientific and intellectual pool of OIC member states

— Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan wished Pakistan felicitations on the 75th Independence Day anniversary and assuming the Chair of the 48th CFM

— He highlighted the role of Muslim countries to achieve peace in Afghanistan and avert tragic humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan

— The OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahim Taha commenced his speech at 1207 hours saying that Ukraine and Russia crisis can cause serious impacts on the economy of the OIC member states which was 28 per cent of the world population

— A video message of the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres was played during the session at 1247 hours in which he urged the Muslim world to develop unity and cohesion for peace and development of humanity

— Kazakhstani Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi delivered statement on behalf of regional groups

— Tunisian Foreign Minister Othman Jerandi started his speech at 1306 hours on behalf of the Arab Group and underlined that terrorism and violent extremism are common enemies, destabilizing Muslim countries

— “We need to work together to promote tolerance of others and convince others for our just causes for peaceful cohabitation,” he remarked. — APP

Qureshi calls upon OIC to act as “reliable partners”

FROM PAGE 01

He said it was a matter of pride for us to host this meeting in 2022 which marked the 75th Anniversary of Pakistan’s independence. “Promoting solidarity and cooperation within the Muslim Ummah is one of the central pillars of Pakistan’s foreign policy. As Chair of the OIC-CFM during 2022-23, Pakistan’s overarching goal shall be to solidify this bridging role further,” he said. He commended the leadership role of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the OIC Summit Chair. Qureshi termed the OIC as the collective voice of nearly two billion Muslims and also a bridge among Muslim nations and the international community. He also highlighted the collective recent achievements including holding the CFM on Afghanistan, establishing the OIC Humanitarian Trust Fund appointment of Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary General and launch of Afghanistan Food Security Programme.

Japan rejects Russia’s halt to Kuril Islands talks

TOKYO: Japan on Tuesday rejected a Russian move to withdraw from peace talks over the disputed Kuril Islands and all related projects amid Tokyo’s sanctions against Moscow. “Russia’s actions are extremely unreasonable and totally unacceptable,” Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told the parliament, according to Kyodo News. “All the current situations have originated from Russia’s aggression on Ukraine,” he added. On Monday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Japan’s “clearly unfriendly position,” which seeks to harm Russia’s interest, makes it impossible to sign a fundamental document on bilateral relations. The ministry said it also terminated visa-free travel for Japanese nationals to the southern Kuril Islands and halted dialogue with Japan on establishing joint economic activities there. “Japan’s stance to seek the settlement of the territorial issue and conclusion of a peace treaty with Russia remains unchanged,” said Kishida. — APP

Naseem, Shaheen shine as Pakistan gain momentum

The hosts’ bowlers remained wicket-less when they walked off for lunch

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Azhar Ali (30) and Abdullah Shafique (45) stood strong against a formidable Australian bowling attack as they both forged an unbeaten second-wicket stand of 70 runs after opener Imam-ul-Haq (11) fell early with just 20 runs on the board in pursuit of visitor’s huge 391 in the crucial 3rd Test at the Gaddafi Stadium. After getting bowled out for 391, Aussie bowlers applied early pressure on the Pakistani batters by bowling tight and lines and length. Consistent bowling for the visitor’s bowlers bore fruit after skipper pacer Pat Cummins trapped Imam LBW early into the innings. After that, Azhar and Abdullah showed a lot of grit and strong defence as they negated the pressure from the Australian bowlers very well, as they will look to stretch the partnership on Day 3 and put Pakistan in a strong position. Meanwhile, Pakistan, while bowling first, bowled out Australia for 391 runs with Shaheen Shah Afridi and Naseem Shah bagging four wickets each. Naseem and Shaheen bagged two wickets each on the second day after lunch whereas Nauman Ali took a wicket to help Pakistan get Australia out under 400. Nauman started the proceedings after the



two teams returned. The left-arm spinner trapped Alex Carey in his legs after he scored 67 runs. Nauman’s scalp also helped Pakistan break 135-runs stand

between Carey and Cameron Green. It wasn’t too long when Naseem bowled a reverse swinger to get rid of Green. The right-handed batter was helpless against Naseem’s screamer. He walked off scoring 79 runs including nine boundaries. The Pakistani bowling duo went on to remove Mitchell Starc (13), Nathan Lyon (4), and Mitchell Swepson (9) in quick succession to send Australia back to the pavilion before tea. Earlier, Green and Carey scored the fifties as Australia gained momentum in the morning session by scoring 320-5 at Lunch on day 2 of the third Test against Pakistan here at Gaddafi Stadium. Resuming at the overnight score of 232-5, Carey (8*) and Green (20*) added 88 runs before lunch to put Australia back in the driving seat. Carey scored 60 off 97 whereas Green made 56 off 134 before lunch on the second day. Carey, at 27, was given out off Hasan Ali in 100th over but a DRS overturned the umpire’s decision of LBW. Pakistani bowlers were consistent with their line and length but thereafter the overnight pair of Green and Carey dealt with them so well to finish off the first session on a strong note for the visitors. The hosts’ bowlers remained wicket-less when they walked off for lunch.

PM reiterates support for Iraq’s integrity

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan held a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Mr. Fuad Hussein. Foreign Minister Hussein is visiting Islamabad for participation in the 48th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers being held in Islamabad on 22-23 March 2022. The Prime Minister recalled the long-standing and friendly ties between the two countries, deeply rooted in shared faith, common values and cultural affinities. He reaffirmed the desire to further strengthen Pakistan’s bilateral relations with Iraq. The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan’s support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Iraq, and acknowledged the successes of the Iraqi government in the fight against terrorism. He appreciated, in particular, the resilience of Iraqi people in their efforts to overcome challenges and rebuild the country. Prime Minister Imran Khan also exchanged views with Foreign Minister Hussein on different regional and global issues as well as on matters of the Islamic Ummah. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of collective action by the OIC to address contemporary challenges faced by Muslims and Islamic countries worldwide. The Iraqi Foreign Minister thanked the Prime Minister for the warm welcome accorded to him and his delegation in Islamabad, and lauded the excellent arrangements of the 48th OIC-CFM session. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan holds a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Fuad Hussein. — DNA

Federal Tax Ombudsman visits Nimir Chemicals

DNA

LAHORE: Dr. Asif Mahmood Shah, Federal Tax Ombudsman of Pakistan visited the facility of Nimir Industrial Chemicals Limited on 22nd March 2022 and inaugurated the Soap Noodles Expansion plant. Nimir Industrial Chemicals Limited is a listed company and is a large chemicals complex situated near Sheikhpura on more

than 100 acres of land. The company produces a diversified range of chemicals as well as personal and home care products. The company has a state of the art infrastructure duly approved by multinational companies. The company fully complies with international standards on GMP, HSE and social compliances. The honourable FTO visited various sections of the manufacturing complex

and praised the setup, the professionalism of the management and sponsors. He also praised Nimir group’s contribution in import substitution, contribution to exchequer and recent start of exports to Middle East and Central Asian Republics. Mr. Zafar Mahmood, CEO of the group, welcomed Mr. Asif Mahmood Shah when upon his arrival along with his senior management.



and protected the rights and duties of not only human beings, but also plants and animals. He said that respect for humanity is the basis of Minhaj-ul-Quran’s call and movement. The reason for the worldwide acceptance of is that this movement conveyed the Mustafavi message of humanity, love and peace to the corners of the world. The Ambassador of Pakistan to Sweden, Dr. Zahoor Ahmed, while expressing his views, said that the services of Minhaj-ul-Quran International and Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri for the prevention of misconceptions about Islam were commendable. Based on the need to cultivate emotions

DNA

STOCKHOLM: Dr. Zahoor Ahmed, Ambassador of Pakistan to Sweden specially attended the conference. The conference was attended by a large number of social, religious, welfare personalities, men and women belonging to the Pakistani community and comrades and associates of Minhaj-ul-Quran International Sweden. Addressing the conference on the topic of “Importance of Unity and Consensus in Islam”, Chairman SC Minhaj-ul-Quran International Dr Hassan Mohiuddin Qadri said that Islam is faith, benevolence and all peace and security. Linking together is a big intellectual fallacy based on prejudice. Islam has determined

to Sweden, Dr. Zahoor Ahmed, while expressing his views, said that the services of Minhaj-ul-Quran International and Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri for the prevention of misconceptions about Islam



Vettori coming to Pak after 18 years

DNA

MELBOURNE: Former New Zealand cricketer Daniel Vettori has joined Australia’s white-ball squad here on Tuesday for their historic tour of Pakistan. On Monday, Cricket Australia (CA) confirmed Vettori as their spin bowling consultant for the Pakistan white-ball tour. Not only for Australia but for Vettori too, the tour of Pakistan is historic as the cricketer-turned coach will be returning to the country after 18 years. Last time, Vettori traveled to Pakistan with his national team for playing ODIs back in November 2003. Pakistan clean swept five-match home series against the Kiwis. It is pertinent to mention here that Australia’s white-ball squad captained by Aaron Finch has started training here on Tuesday ahead of their departure for the Pakistan tour. Vettori is also attending players in the camp as a consultant coach. Australia will play three ODIs and one-off T20I from March 29 to April 5.

US, Philippines to hold ‘largest-ever’ military exercise

MANILA: The US and Philippines will hold the “largest-ever” joint military exercise across the Luzon island from March 28 to April 8, the US Embassy in Manila said on Tuesday. Some 5,100 US military personnel and 3,800 Philippine soldiers will team up for the exercise in the archipelago nation, according to a statement by the embassy. The joint military exercise, known as Balikatan 2022, will focus on “maritime security, amphibious operations, live-fire training, urban operations, aviation operations, counterterrorism, and humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief,” the statement said. Exercises like Balikatan, the US embassy said, “strengthen international partnerships and the participating militaries’ abilities to rapidly respond to crises throughout the Indo-Pacific region.” The US-led Quad, a loose security alliance along with Australia, Japan, and India, aims to counter the increasing economic and military influence of China in the wider Asia-Pacific region. Washington has renamed the region as Indo-Pacific to determine its interests along with its Quad partners. “Balikatan is a critical opportunity to work shoulder-to-shoulder with our Philippine allies toward a ‘free and open Indo-Pacific that is more connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient,’ as our Indo-Pacific Strategy calls for. The US is proud to continue our participation in this long-standing exercise,” said Heather Variava, charge d’affaires of the US Embassy in the Philippines. The Balikatan 2022, said the statement, is the “largest-ever iteration of the Philippine-led annual exercise taking place across Luzon.” During the military exercise, the US and Philippine military will train together to “expand and advance shared tactics, techniques, and procedures that strengthen our response capabilities and readiness for real-world challenges,” said Jay Bergeron, major general of US 3rd Marine Division Commanding General. Maj. Gen. Charlton Sean Gaerlan of the Philippine military said the military exercise “is a testament to the strength of the Philippines and US’ security relationship.” — Agencies

Allies no more with PTI: Moulana Fazl

FROM PAGE 01

MQM-P’s top brass — convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and other leaders — after meeting the government’s ally party at their head office in Karachi’s Bahadurabad area. “They (MQM-P) will announce that they are with us in a day or two [..] after meeting the MQM-P leadership, I am completely satisfied that the no-confidence motion will be successful,” the PDM chief said, as the days for the National Assembly to vote on the no-trust motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan draw close. NA Speaker Asad Qaiser has convened the crucial session of the lower house to deliberate on the no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan on March 25. The PDM chief said the language PM Imran Khan has used during the recent rallies in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was not that of an “honourable person.” “I think it is disrespectful to have such people assume such big offices,” Fazl said. Before meeting the MQM-P delegation at their head office, a journalist asked Fazl whether the Opposition was afraid of the outcome of the no-confidence motion. At this, the PDM chief said: “Hum ghabratay nahi hain (we are not afraid).” With the NA session for voting on the no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan expected to take place this month, 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’s alliance in the lower house — by holding back-to-back meetings with them.

Azeri President felicitates Pakistan

FROM PAGE 01

The present high level of Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations based on friendship and brotherhood is gratifying. The multitude of reciprocal visits, signed documents and agreements secured between our countries play a vital role in developing our cooperation. We are determined to solidify further our unity empowered by our shared moral values and the will of our peoples. I am grateful to you for Pakistan’s constant support and the just stance towards our country’s territorial integrity, sovereignty and inviolability of its internationally recognized borders, in line with the norms and principles of the international law and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Our people value significantly such support by your brotherly country for Azerbaijan. I recall with fondest memories our meeting and the exchange of views we held in the spirit of sincerity and mutual trust in Ashgabat last year. I am confident that the steps we take towards expanding our inter-state relations and the strategic partnership, including our productive cooperation within the international institutions, will continue to serve the interests of our peoples. On this festive day, I wish robust health, happiness and success to you and everlasting peace and prosperity to the brotherly people of Pakistan,” the letter said.

Medvedev, Sabalenka top seeds at Miami Open

MIAMI: Daniil Medvedev will try to reclaim the world number one ranking and top seed Aryna Sabalenka chases her first final in 10 months at the ATP and WTA Miami Open. Men’s play starts Wednesday and women’s play begins Tuesday in the hardcourt tournament at Hard Rock Stadium, where highest seeds receive first-round byes. Serbia’s Novak Djokovic moved into the top spot of the rankings this week, bumping out reigning US Open champion Medvedev after a three-week stay following his third-round exit at Indian Wells. The 26-year-old Russian, runner-up at the past two Australian Opens, would return to the top spot with a semi-final run at Miami. — APP

Briefs

Russia summons US envoy over Biden's comment

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday summoned the US ambassador in protest after President Joe Biden branded Russian leader Vladimir Putin a "war criminal" for Moscow's actions in Ukraine, saying he had endangered ties. "Such statements by the American president, which are not worthy of a high-ranking statesman, have put Russian-American relations on the verge of rupture," the foreign ministry said in a statement.

The statement said ambassador John Sullivan had been handed a formal letter of protest over "recent unacceptable statements" made by Biden. He was warned that "hostile actions taken against Russia would receive a firm and decisive response," the ministry said. Biden described Putin as a "war criminal" in remarks to reporters last week, amid heavy fighting in Ukraine after Moscow sent tens of thousands of troops into the pro-Western country. In Washington, State Department Spokesman Ned Price rebuffed Moscow's complaint. "They've given their version of events," he said.

"I think it is worth repeating that Russia is carrying out an unprovoked and an unjustified war on Ukraine and we are seeing clearly evidence that they are intentionally targeting civilians and committing indiscriminate attacks," he said. Biden's comments last week "speak to the horror, of the brutality Russia has unleashed on an innocent neighbor, an innocent neighbor that posed absolutely no threat or security risk to Russia." He said that it was important to keep open channels of communication, "especially during times of conflict." - APP

EU split over Russia oil sanctions

BRUSSELS: EU nations remained split Monday over banning Russian energy imports, as a top official from the bloc decried "a massive war crime" being carried out by Moscow in Ukrainian city Mariupol. But foreign and defence ministers meeting in Brussels did give the green light to doubling a financial package for arms to Ukraine to 1 billion euros. "The EU and Western allies have unleashed a barrage of sanctions that have battered the Russian economy as they look to punish President Vladimir Putin for invading his neighbour. Some members states, including the Baltic countries and Ireland, have pushed to hit Russia's key oil exports in a new round of sanctions. But economic powerhouse Germany - and other nations still reliant on Russian fossil fuels - have been reluctant to target the key sectors. "Today was not a day to take decisions in the area, so no decision was taken," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. "What we need to do is ensure that we come with an effective response which won't lead to an unbearable cost for member states." - APP

IsDB president seeks OIC support for Afghanistan

"I am pleased to update that the charter has been signed with the OIC. This is the first but very pivotal step that will take the way for operationalization of the fund"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser Tuesday sought generous support from the member countries of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), development partners, humanitarian organizations and donors to successfully operationalize the newly formed Afghanistan Humanitarian Trust Fund. He said the establishment of Afghanistan humanitarian trust fund is strong message of solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan. Since 76% of the Afghanistan population lives in rural areas, the primary focus of the fund would be to save lives

by preserving rural livelihoods and integrated holistic approach is proposed to be adopted to ensure that the fund's limited resources are deployed most effectively to maximize developmental impact, he said in his address at 48th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers here.

He said the extraordinary meeting of OIC FMs held in Islamabad on December 19, 2021 asked the IDB to establish, operationalize, and manage the fund to channel humanitarian assistance through Afghanistan and partnership with the international and regional stakeholders. "I am pleased to update that the charter has been signed with the OIC. This is the first but very pivotal step that will take the

way for operationalization of the fund", he added.

He said the IsDB was strongly committed to ensure strict guidelines to govern all of the fund's activities. "Accordingly we guarantee utmost transparency, and all aspects of the fund's activities and adherence to the relevant international standards and best practices." Given the gravity of the challenges faced by Afghanistan today, Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser said there was consensus that the international community needed to collectively provide a holistic practical, sustainable and comprehensive solution learning from the lessons of the past and leveraging this strength of all stakeholders to address the daunting challenge in Afghanistan. He

said since last December, the Bank had been engaged in its continued coordination and consultation with the OIC, development partners, humanitarian organizations and donors. "We have also consulted with countries supporting the Afghan people. We are committed to benefiting the all relevant experiences and exploring potential cooperation opportunities to ensure formulation of an impact for partnership to undertake collective efforts to achieve the fund's objectives", he added. The IsDB president said, "We are committed to working with all our partners to break the prevalent vicious cycles of poverty and initiate a cycle of hope and self reliance in the country". Depending on the fund's

amount and possible replenishment, the IsDB President informed that a comprehensive approach would be adopted to promote long term peace and stability. This could be achieved by enhancing agriculture productivity to ensure food security, ensuring access to quality education specially for females, provision of healthcare facilities to rural communities, women and youth empowerment as well as facilitating rural electrification. He said the fund in close coordination with partners was also actively exploring opportunities to leverage the private sector to support the humanitarian efforts specially by focusing and creating meaningful opportunities in the agro-business through supporting micro and small

medium enterprises. "The IDB is also ideally positioned to provide the necessary platform for neighboring and regional member countries to play a positive role by optimally leveraging the IDB South-South programme benefiting from the experience, expertise of several OIC and IDB member countries.", he said adding that the IDB under the overall umbrella of the fund was keen to facilitate the capacity building in key sectors such as banking and finance, medicine and agriculture. "We also expect Islamic finances particular Islamic social financing such as Zakat to play an essential role in facilitating resources mobilization and successful delivery of the programme," he added.

SL deploys troops amid fuel shortage

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka ordered troops to petrol stations Tuesday as sporadic protests erupted among the thousands of motorists queuing up daily for scarce fuel. The South Asian island nation is grappling with its worst economic meltdown in over seven decades, with rolling electricity blackouts and essential goods such as food and cooking gas also in short supply. Soldiers were deployed after angry crowds blocked a main artery in Colombo and held up traffic for hours because they were unable to buy kerosene oil on Monday, government spokesman Ramesh Pathirana said. Footage of the incident shared on social media showed a group of angry women blockading a tourist coach to protest shortages of kerosene needed for cooking stoves "We saw tourists being held up, we are also hearing that some people may be hoarding oil and that is why the government decided to deploy the military," Pathirana told reporters in the capital. The troop call also follows the stabbing murder of a motorcyclist by another driver after a dispute over his place in a long queue for fuel outside Colombo. "Temperers are getting frayed as queues get longer," a top defence official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "A decision was made last night to call out soldiers to reinforce the police. This is to discourage any unrest." Three elderly people have dropped dead at fuel queues since Saturday, police said, adding that numerous petrol stations saw people camping overnight to wait for diesel and gasoline purchases. Military officials said soldiers were deployed at pumping stations of the state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corp, which accounts for two-thirds of the fuel retail business in the nation of 22 million people. - Agencies

PM for intensified trade co-op with Kazakhstan

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Tuesday, while recalling Pakistan's 'Vision Central Asia' policy, underscored the need to intensify cooperation in enhancing trade and connectivity between Pakistan and Kazakhstan.

The prime minister said this in a meeting with Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tileuberdi, here on the sidelines of the 48th Session of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Council of Foreign Ministers. During the meeting, they discussed the bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues. Views were exchanged on various regional and international issues, including Afghanistan. The prime minister recalled his meeting with President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in September 2021.

Foreign Minister Tileuberdi briefed the prime minister on the developments in Kazakhstan and its bilateral cooperation with Pakistan. The prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continue enhancing cooperation between the two countries in all areas of mutual interest, including at regional and international forums like the United Nations, OIC, Shanghai Cooperation Organization and Economic Cooperation Organization. He also looked forward to the visit of President Tokayev to Pakistan later this year.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tileuberdi calls on PM Imran Khan. - DNA

Ambassador Mariam meets Bulgarian minister

DNA

SOFIA: The Ambassador of Pakistan to Bulgaria, Ms. Mariam Aftab, called on the Minister for Tourism, H.E. Mr. Hristo Prodanov. The Deputy Minister for Tourism, Dr. Mariela Modeva, was also present on the occasion. The two sides discussed ways in which to

promote tourism between Bulgaria and Pakistan. The Ambassador briefed the Minister on Pakistan's emergence as an exciting new tourist destination and on the government's efforts to develop the infrastructure for tourism. The Minister expressed great interest in developing further collaboration between the Bulgarian

Ministry for Tourism and PTDC and assured the Ambassador of the full support and cooperation of the Ministry of Tourism in this regard. It was agreed that an online meeting between the two would be organized in the near future to develop a concrete action plan to promote tourism between the two friendly countries.



Red Cross chief heads to Moscow

GENEVA: The head of the international Red Cross told AFP Monday he will travel to Moscow this week for talks about the conflict in Ukraine, including efforts to secure visits with detainees. Peter Maurer, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), said he would travel to the Russian capital on Tuesday, nearly a month after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine. He told AFP in an interview that he expected to meet with high-level defence and foreign ministries officials in the following days, and hoped to make progress on issues the ICRC has been raising as the caretaker of the Geneva Conventions, regarding "prisoners of war, the deceased, the conduct of hostilities."

The trip follows Maurer's visit to Ukraine last week, and he said he had received "very positive indications" from both sides "with regard to our mandate and role under the Geneva Conventions." - APP

Pak embassy promotes truck art in Bulgaria



SOFIA: The Embassy of Pakistan in Sofia, Bulgaria, in collaboration with the Sredets Cultural Center arranged an exhibition and demonstration of Pakistani truck art in Sofia on 21 March 2022. The event was part of the ongoing celebrations for the 75th anniversary of Pakistan's independence. A number of people from different walks of life including artists, bloggers, journalists and students attended the exhibition and watched the artists from Pakistan demonstrate their skill. A short documentary on Pakistani truck art was also shown on the occasion. In her remarks, the Ambassador of Pakistan to Bulgaria, Ms. Mariam Aftab welcomed the guests and said that a truck art exhibition was a fitting way to celebrate Pakistan Day as it reflected the richness, colour and vibrancy of Pakistani culture. The Director of the Sredets Cultural Center, Ms. Lilya Tosheva, thanked the Embassy for organizing the event at the Center and introducing the Bulgarian people to this unique form of art from Pakistan. - DNA

Two die in Swedish school attack

MALMÖ: Two women died after being stabbed at a high school in southern Sweden on Monday, police said, adding that an 18-year-old student had been arrested. The two women, both in their 50s, "were employees of the school", the police said in a statement following the attack at Malmo Latinskola, a secondary school in the centre of Malmo, the country's third largest city. Local media said the alleged attacker called the emergency number to say where he was and that he had put down his weapon and admitted to having killed two people. He was armed with a knife and an axe, according to several Swedish media. The suspect was arrested without difficulty shortly after the arrival of the first patrol, according to the police account. Earlier in the evening, police had initially reported two injured among the around 50 people in the school at the time of the incident. The two victims "were taken to the hospital but their lives could not be saved", the authorities said. Police were alerted around 5:15 pm (1615 GMT) and a first patrol was able to enter the school. - Agencies

Chinese teams comb debris of crashed jet

DNA

WUZHOU: Chinese recovery teams on Tuesday picked through the debris of a crashed China Eastern jet after it inexplicably plummeted from the sky into a mountainside with 132 people on board. Hopes of finding any survivors had all but vanished nearly a day after the Boeing 737-800 passenger jet nosedived into the mountain - likely making it China's deadliest air crash in nearly three decades. Questions mounted over the cause of the crash, which saw the stricken jet drop 20,000 feet (6096 metres) in just over a minute before plunging into rugged terrain in southern China on Monday afternoon. President Xi Jinping quickly called for a full probe following the crash as search teams, firefighters and other personnel descended upon the site in a rural area of Guangxi province.

On Tuesday scorch marks were visible from the crash and resulting fire, rescue workers told AFP, with one speculating that passengers and their belongings had been "totally incinerated" from the intensity of the blaze. A villager near the sprawling crash site, giving his surname only as Ou, recounted hearing a "sound like thunder" on Monday afternoon followed by a blaze blistering the surrounding hills. State media showed uniformed search teams clambering over a scene of upturned earth, blasted trees and scattered debris, including a section of plane bearing the carrier's blue and red livery. Other teams were shown launching drones, in a search mission complicated by the steep terrain and dense vegetation. The disaster occurred after a high-speed vertical nosedive, according to a video of the descent carried by Chinese media. AFP could not im-

mediately verify the video's authenticity. In Guangzhou, staff assisted loved ones of the 123 passengers and nine crew members aboard the plane, which stopped sending any flight information after dropping a total of 26,000 feet in altitude in just three minutes. Flight MU5735, which took off from Kunming shortly after 1:00 pm (0500 GMT), "lost airborne contact over Wuzhou," a city in the Guangxi region, according to the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). "The company expresses its deep condolences for the passengers and crew members who died in the plane crash," China Eastern said in a statement late Monday without providing more information. The disaster prompted an unusually swift public reaction from Xi, who said he was "shocked," ordered an immediate investigation into its cause, and called for "absolute safety" in air travel.

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Briefs

ADB approves \$300 mln loan for Pak capital markets

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) Tuesday approved a \$300 million loan to further develop Pakistan's capital markets, promote private investment in the country, and help to mobilize domestic resources to finance sustainable growth.

The second subprogram of ADB's Third Capital Market Development Program builds on institutional and regulatory reforms put in place under the first subprogram approved in 2020. It aims to catalyze institutional investor demand and increase the range of alternative financial instruments such as derivatives and commodity futures that are available to investors, says a press release issued by the ADB.

"For several years ADB has been Pakistan's lead development partner in supporting the evolution of its capital markets," said ADB Director General for Central and West Asia Yevgeniy Zhukov. "By making the country's capital markets more robust and strengthening government debt management, this new program will also help to mobilize more domestic resources which support the government's efforts to finance sustainable growth and respond effectively to crises."

Pakistan's finance sector is dominated by banks and this lack of diversification increases the risk of the country not being able to withstand financial shocks and periods of uncertainty. - APP

Russian opp. leader Navalny sentenced for 9 years

POKROV: A Russian court on Tuesday found jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny guilty on embezzlement charges that could see his prison sentence significantly extended. "Navalny committed fraud - the theft of property by an organised group," judge Margarita Kotova said, according to an AFP reporter present at the trial.

Navalny, President Vladimir Putin's most vocal domestic critic, was jailed last year on old fraud charges after surviving a poison attack with Novichok nerve agent that he blames on the Kremlin.

The trial on Tuesday concerned additional embezzlement and contempt of court charges and Navalny had been tried at the prison colony outside Moscow where he is already serving a two-and-a-half-year sentence. Navalny appeared in the makeshift court wearing his black prison uniform, with journalists watching via a video link. He listened closely as judge Kotova read out the verdict, sometimes smiling, an AFP reporter said. Investigators accused Navalny of stealing for personal use several million dollars' worth of donations that were given to his political organisations. - APP

Trudeau gets deal to stay in power until 2025

TORONTO: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal minority government has reached a deal with the New Democratic Party (NDP) to stay in power until 2025. In exchange, the Liberals will support the left-leaning NDP on several of the party's key priorities in parliament. Mr Trudeau said on Tuesday that he believes the agreement will provide "stability" for Canadians. The move has been strongly criticised by Canada's Conservative Party.

Speaking at a news conference on Tuesday, Mr Trudeau said that the deal - which he termed a "supply and confidence" agreement - begins today and will continue through the end of Canada's current parliament in 2025. "What this means is that during this uncertain time, the government can function with predictability and stability, present and implement budgets and get things done for Canadians," he said. - APP

Imran receives Foreign Minister of Palestine

Foreign Minister Maliki expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's unwavering support and principled position on Palestine

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Minister of Palestine, Dr. Riyad al-Maliki, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan, today, on the sidelines of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Islamabad.

The Prime Minister reiterated Pakistan's unequivocal support for the rights of the Palestinian people and their just struggle. He underscored that the Palestinian tragedy, which is a matter of great anguish for Pakistani people and Muslims all over the world, is at the heart of the turmoil in the Middle East. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The Foreign Minister underlined that the unresolved issues of the Muslim Ummah, such as Palestine and the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, were among the root causes of instability in the respective regions. He added that the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) were suffering grave atrocities and unabated repression for demanding their inalienable right to self-determination. Foreign Minister Maliki expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's unwavering support and principled position on Palestine. Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Maliki also exchanged views on the excellent bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Palestine as well as the collaboration between the two sides at regional and international forums including the OIC.



Australia congratulates Pakistanis on Pakistan Day



ISLAMABAD: Australia's Chargé d'Affaires in Pakistan, Bryce Hutchesson has issued a statement marking Pakistan Day. "I congratulate the people and Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in celebrating the 82nd anniversary of the passing of the Pakistan Resolution - the proposal adopted in Lahore in 1940 which foreshadowed Pakistan's creation. Australia has been a steadfast friend to Pakistan since independence. Our countries have much in common, with a common heritage no better illustrated than our shared love of cricket. The goodwill surrounding

All this provides a solid foundation for strengthening our bilateral ties, underpinned by a vibrant Pakistani-origin community in Australia now approaching 90,000 people

the current tour of Pakistan by the Australian cricket team has been heart-warming and shows yet again the hospitality for which Pakistanis are renowned.

We have long supported Pakistan's efforts to build prosperity and inclusive development, including through water management, rural productivity and gender equality. We have stood with Pakistan in the face of COVID-19, strengthening disease detection capabilities and providing humanitarian assistance. And we have worked together on transnational security challenges.

All this provides a solid foundation for strengthening our bilateral ties, underpinned by a vibrant Pakistani-origin community in Australia now approaching 90,000 people. With easing of travel restrictions, Australia looks forward to welcoming many Pakistanis to our shores in 2022 and beyond, including Pakistani students returning to our world-class educational institutions.

Growing trade and commercial ties will support post-pandemic economic recovery in both our countries. There are many opportunities for mutual benefit, particularly in education and agriculture. Australia's excellence in innovation, science and technology provides fertile opportunities for business-to-business collaboration. This Pakistan Day, as Islamabad hosts the 48th summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation under the theme, 'Building Partnerships for Unity, Justice, and Development', Australia is pleased to be attending as a guest to underpin closer engagement on this agenda that is so important to all. On behalf of the people and Government of Australia, I wish our good friend Pakistan Yaum-e-Pakistan Mubarak!" - DNA

Pakistan values ties with Azerbaijan, says army chief

DNA

RAWALPINDI: His Excellency Colonel General Zakir Hasanov, Minister of Defence of Azerbaijan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation and bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed. COAS said that Pakistan values its relations with Azerbaijan, rooted in religious affinity, common values, geo-strategic significance, potential for mutually beneficial and enhanced economic and defence cooperation. Both reiterated the desire to further enhance bilateral relations including efforts for peace and security in the region. Referring to OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers session, COAS termed it a historic development for addressing the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and bringing international community to a shared vision and joint strategy to find solution to emerging challenges in the region vital for peace and stability. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's role in regional stability and pledged to play his role for further

improvements in diplomatic cooperation with Pakistan at all levels. He specially appreciated Pakistan's efforts for hosting the OIC's 48th Council of Foreign Ministers. Meanwhile, Ruslan Kazakbaev, Foreign Minister of Republic of Kyrgyzstan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ.

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CM lays foundation stone of new bus stand

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan on Tuesday paid a short visit to Peshawar city where he performed the groundbreaking of New General Bus Stand Project which would be completed by June 2023 at an estimated cost of Rs. 5 billion. New general bus stand covering 303 kanals of land would have 375 bays for parking of light and heavy vehicles and would provide all time solution to the issues related to vehicular traffic in Peshawar City. It would have all the facilities including Commercial Shops, Cafeteria, Masjid, Toilets, Workshops, Rest Areas, Waiting Areas, Service Stations, Petrol Pump, Water Recycling Plant and Solar System etc. All the bus stands operating in the city would be shifted to the new general bus stand which will help reduce environmental pollution in the city. The chief minister also inaugurated newly established family park at Bashir Abad which has been completed at a cost of Rs. 75 million.

Provincial Cabinet Members Taimur Salim Jhagra, Kamran Bangash, Faisal Amin Gandapur, Members of Provincial Assembly Asif Khan, Fazal Elahi, Malak Wajid, Arbab Jehandad and others were also present on the occasion.

The chief minister while addressing the newly elected local bodies representatives and party workers at Bashir Abad has said that local bodies representatives should serve the people with zeal and zest and play their respective role in resolving public issues of their areas. He said that an effective local bodies system was an integral part of Prime Minister's vision adding that the provincial government would provide every possible support to the local bodies representatives to resolve the issues being faced by the general public. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan was working day and night for the welfare of poor people and to stabilize the national economy.

Egypt's Sisi hosts UAE, Israeli leaders

CAIRO: Leaders of Egypt, Israel, and the United Arab Emirates have met for a three-way summit, the first of its kind since the UAE normalised relations with Israel, with the aftermath of the invasion of Ukraine, as well as the Iran nuclear deal, on the agenda.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi hosted the talks on Tuesday at the Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and the UAE's de facto ruler, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Bennett and Mohammed had also held bilateral talks with el-Sisi on Monday. Egypt's presidency said the three leaders discussed energy, market stability, and food security.

A statement from Bennett's office said, "The leaders discussed the ties between the three countries in the context of recent developments in the world and the region, and the ways to strengthen them on all levels." Israeli media said the leaders also addressed reports that Iran and Western powers, including the United States, are close to a deal to revive the 2015 nuclear accord, which Israel vehemently opposes. - Agencies

Zardari, Khalid Maqbool discuss no-trust motion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former president and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday telephoned Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui to discuss the no-confidence motion, citing sources. In a telephonic conversation, the PPP co-chairman asked the MQM-P convener Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui about his party decision on the no-confidence motion. Asif Ali Zardari asked Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui to directly remain in contact with him and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhattu Zardari to which the MQM-P convener replied: "Yes will remain in touch," the sources said.

The PPP co-chairman invited the MQM-P stalwart to Islamabad and meet him to finalise the matters before the no-confidence motion. I and Bilawal will look after the settlement reached with MQM-P, Zardari assured. On the other hand, the National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser has summoned a session on March 25 following the opposition's requisition. The NA session will be held at the Parliament House at 11:00 am on Friday.

MONAL

WHERE AMBANCE SETS THE STAGE

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