



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan fully prepared to thwart enemy's aggression

Detailed News On Page-01

Nowruz; Time of renewal, regeneration

Detailed News On Page-07

Journey which started in 1940 was not easy

Detailed News On Page-08

Briefs

Biden heads to Europe

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden said Wednesday he believes Russia's potential use of chemical weapons in Ukraine is a "real threat." "I think it's a real threat," said Biden ahead of his departure for Europe when asked how high is the threat of chemical warfare right now. Biden is scheduled to attend a NATO summit, EU leaders' gathering and G7 summit this week. During his talks in Europe, Biden is expected to announce new US and allied sanctions on Russia in response to its ongoing war against Ukraine.

Russia warns NATO

DNA

MOSCOW: Deploying NATO peacekeepers in Ukraine would lead to direct confrontation between Russia and the North-Atlantic Alliance, Moscow warned on Wednesday. Russia has also taken note of Poland's intention to raise the issue of sending military contingents to Ukraine at the upcoming NATO summit, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at a meeting with students of the MGIMO University in Moscow. "I hope they (Poland) understand what they are talking about. This will be the very direct clash of the Russian and NATO armed forces, which everyone not only would like to avoid, but say that it should not take place in principle," said Lavrov.

US greets Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Embassy in Islamabad extends its best wishes to the Pakistani people on the occasion of Pakistan Day and announces the launch, in partnership with Pakistan, of a joint campaign to celebrate the 75th anniversary of our bilateral relations. Chargé d'affaires Angela P. Aggeler noted: "This year marks the 75th anniversary of Pakistan's birth as a nation and the 75th anniversary of our bilateral relationship."

Pakistan Day marked with patriotism

Pakistan fully prepared to thwart enemy's aggression: President Alvi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The nation is celebrating the 82nd Pakistan Day with zeal and fervour today (March 23), with the joint armed forces parade held in full swing in the federal capital to exhibit the country's military prowess and cultural diversities. Prime Minister Imran Khan, Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Naval Chief Admiral Ajmal Khan Niazi, Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee General Nadeem Raza, Defence Minister Pervaiz Khattak attended the arms show. Other cabinet members, diplomats, senior civil and military officials, and prominent figures who gained accolades for their services to Pakistan were also present on the occasion. The parade held at Shakarparian Parade Ground included contingents of the tri-services, paramilitary forces and civil armed forces, whereas the troops from Pakistan's friend countries including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Bahrain also participated in the show. President Dr Arif Alvi while speaking on the occasion said Pakistan would never compromise on its sovereignty and vowed that "any external aggression will be dealt with strongly".

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J-10C fighter jets enthrall with first-ever flypast

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A special squadron of the Pakistan Air Force's (PAF) J-10C fighter jets showed off their skills at the military parade on Wednesday. This was the first-ever flypast performance by the Chinese planes that were inducted into the PAF earlier this month. As part of Pakistan Day celebrations, the armed forces showcased their might at the majestic military parade in Islamabad. The grand parade featured a march by different contingents of the armed forces and fighter planes' aerobatic manoeuvres. Apart from the J-10C squadron flypast, JF-17 Thunder, F-16, and Mirage planes also demonstrated their skills. Sherdils, an aerobatic team of the air force, enthralled the crowd with aerial stunts, painting the sky different colours.

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ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan witnessing the Pakistan Day Parade at Shakarparian Parade Ground. – DNA More pictures on Page 3

Can NA speaker disregard dissident MNAs' votes?

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has moved the Supreme Court to seek its interpretation on Article 63(A) of the Constitution – which deals with the disqualification of lawmakers over defection from the parliamentary party. The government, as the days approaches for the National Assembly to vote on the no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan, is also mulling whether the speaker can disregard the votes of the lawmakers who go against the party's policy. In this regard, when Attorney-General of Pakistan Khalid Javed Khan appeared in talk show on Tuesday,

Continued on Page 04

Will not resign, reiterates PM

My narrative about 'neutral' was misconstrued; will fight to the hilt

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan said Wednesday he would "surprise" the Opposition and lay his cards on the table a day before the National Assembly votes on the no-confidence motion against him. While conversing with journalists in the Federal Capital, the prime minister told the Opposition that they have laid all of their cards, but the no-confidence motion against him would not be successful. "I will not resign under any circumstance. I will play till the last ball [...] and I will surprise them a day before as they are still under pressure," the prime minister said, without revealing further details. NA Speaker Asad Qaiser has summoned the session for the no-confidence motion on March 25 – and in line with the NA rules, the voting has to take place after three and within seven days. "My trump card is that I have not laid any of my cards yet," the prime minister said confidently, as he vowed to foil the no-trust motion.

Continued on Page 04

Allied parties may join Opp. camp

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The joint opposition's efforts to cajole key government allies to the centre and province bore fruit eventually to topple the PTI regime on Tuesday as MQM-P, PML-Q and BAP decided to stand with the Opposition, Geo News reported. The atmosphere of uncertainty and political temperatures in the country continue to rise as the opposition has tabled a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan. First, around 24 lawmakers announced to vote in favour of the no-trust move and dissociated themselves from the ruling party. But now, even after

Continued on Page 04

In Afghanistan, girls schools still locked

Former President Hamid Karzai has shown resentment over continuous closure of girls schools

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Taliban has adopted a confusing policy for Education sector after coming into power, which has not only made ironic rest of the world but leads to depriving almost of girls babies of their just right of Education. Despite making tall claims and commitments with the international community, girls schools from 7th till 12th classes are still locked. However, in certain parts and parcels of war-stricken Afghanistan, primary girls' schools are functioning but facing deficiency of teachers. Whereas Universities and other higher educational institutions including Medical Colleges and faculties are also in function whereas Special Pardah's or (divisions) within class rooms made man-

datory for girls and boys students. Couple of days back, Degrees Awarding ceremony (or graduation ceremony) was arranged in Qandahar University where besides boys a large number of girls students also received degrees and certificates from a Taliban office holder. The photos of the event widely went viral through social media and attracted mixed reaction. However, most of the people have appreciated Taliban office holders participation in the event and encouraging girls students who completed their graduation and post graduation. Meanwhile former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai has shown resentment over continuous closure of girls schools and asked the Taliban government to

Continued on Page 04

Chinese FM meets COAS

NEWS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Wang Yi, State Counselor and Foreign Minister of the People Republic of China called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), on Wednesday. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and measures to further enhance bilateral defence cooperation were discussed. Chinese Foreign Minister said that Pakistan-China relationship is based on convergence of views and mutual respect. Appreciating professionalism of Pakistan Army, Foreign Minister said that

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Imran has to go for the sake of progress: Bilawal

Bilawal says PM has destroyed economy and foreign policy

BUREAU REPORT

MALAKAND: Imran Khan is an animal and wants the law of the jungle in Pakistan. Imran Khan was imposed on Pakistan to destroy its economy, politics and foreign policy. Imran Khan will be booted out through democratic means.

This was said by the Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while addressing a charged public rally in Dargai, Malakand in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that the relation between the people of Malakand district and the PPP goes back three generations. Quaid-e-Awam established a tax free zone and if anyone tries to take this status

of Malakand then the Jiyalas will chase them out. Quaid-e-Awam laid the foundation of edible oil factory and spinning mills in Malakand district. He gave the right of free passport so the people could work from abroad and help their families. Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto provided gas and electricity to the people of this area. She also provided employment, not only to the youth but also women of the area through establishing women banks and police stations. President Zardari gave an identity to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and fulfilled the promise of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto by raising the flag of Pakistan in Swat. He made it possible for 2.5 million IDPs to return to their homes in three months with compensation while also striking out utility bills and loans.

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Peshawar BRT to buy 86 new buses from China

“The more the BRT expands, the more cost effective it will get. It will also reduce Peshawar’s carbon emissions and provide clean, high quality transport to more than 900,000 residents in Peshawar”

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Peshawar Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) will purchase 86 state-of-the-art new buses from China to operate more feeder routes to facilitate people of the provincial capital, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday quoting official sources. Peshawar BRT said in a statement that ‘The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)’ had obtained the International Sustainable Transport Award and this landmark achievement was the reflection of the vision

of people-oriented policies of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government. “Peshawar BRT would purchase 86 State-of-the-art new buses from China to operationalize more feeder routes on time,” the statement added. Peshawar BRT stated that keeping in view the increasing popularity and utility of BRT, the number of buses and feeder routes of BRT would be further increased so that the entire population of Peshawar could benefit from this modern transport facility. “After the arrival of 86

new buses, a total of 244 buses would be in the fleet of BRT buses. More feeder routes will start soon,” the statement explained. Later on Monday afternoon, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance and Health Minister Taimur Khan Jhagra said that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government had approved six more feeder routes for BRT to facilitate a maximum number of people and provide them with the best travelling facilities in the provincial capital. He remarked that Chief Minister Mahmood Khan

had approved new feeder routes that include Hayatabad Phase 1 extension, Nasirbagh Road including Regi Model Town (RMT), Chamkani - Jhagra, Pabbi, Warsak Road, Khyber Road and Charsadda Road. Jhagra noted that BRT had truly become the nucleus of Peshawar’s transport system. “The more the BRT expands, the more cost effective it will get. It will also reduce Peshawar’s carbon emissions and provide clean, high quality transport to more than 900,000 residents in Peshawar,” he contended.



Pakistan Day observed across Faisalabad dist

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The Pakistan Day was observed throughout the District with enthusiastic. The main flag hoisting ceremony was held at Metropolitan Corporation. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad, CPO Ghulam Mubashir Maikan and MPA Firdous Rai hoisted the flag and cut the cake. ADC HQ Kashif Raza Awan, SSP Operations Abdullah luc, CTO Tanvir Malik, Assistant Commissioner City Sahibzada M. Yousaf, CEO DEA Ali Ahmad Siyan, CO MPC Zubair Hussain, In charge Control Room M. Sadiq, Educationist M. Akhtar Butt and other officers were also present. The March Past was also held from MPC and culminated at District Council Chowk after passing through Chenab Club Chowk, Gumti chowk, Circular road, Katchri Bazar, Chowk Clock Tower, Amin Pur Bazar, Jail road, outside Agriculture University. Deputy Commissioner said that in the history of Pakistan independence, Pakistan Day, March 23, can never be forgotten. It is a day when the dream of an independent homeland was laid down. Today we are free but this freedom is the result of many sacrifices, efforts and hard work. He said that the resolution passed in 1940 became the basis for the establishment of Pakistan. March

23 is a day of building emotions and realizing dreams. He said that the journey to freedom is never easy, Pakistan had to go through rivers of fire and blood to reach its destination. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the struggle for a separate homeland was successful by making many sacrifices. He said that the journey of building Pakistan from the establishment of Pakistan is going on gradually. At this stage, every member of the nation has to go ahead and play his role. He said that today we have to take the spirit, determination and solidarity of March 23, 1940 and take our dear homeland forward. CPO and MPA congratulated the entire nation and especially the people of Faisalabad and said that today paved the way for the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent and the resolution passed at the historic meeting at Manto Park. It was a practical embodiment of Allama Iqbal’s vision. Meanwhile, the ceremony was also held at Divisional Information Office Faisalabad. Director Information Muhammad Awais Abid distributed Shields and Certificates among best people former of the office. The internees of CM Punjab Internship program of media graduates Tehreem Fatima, Sana Ata, Zahra

Batool, Uzma, Aqsa, Iqra and other delivered the speech. DPR said that the resolution was an important milestone in the struggle for a separate Pakistan and on this most important historical day, the Muslims of the subcontinent, under the enthusiastic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, came together and determined their destiny. He said that the journey of building Pakistan which started from the establishment of Pakistan is still incomplete and has to complete this incomplete journey we have to work day and night and use all our energies to achieve our destination. He said that by adopting golden principles like unity, organization, discipline, hard work, honesty and trustworthiness, Pakistan can be brought to the path of development and prosperity. He said that our forefathers had made everlasting sacrifices for the betterment of Pakistan which demanded that we should not spare any sacrifice for the development and prosperity of Pakistan. During the ceremony the cake was also cut. Muhammad Faisal, Faiz Rasool, Muhammad Rashid, M. Bilal Mustafa, Aftab Ahmad, Khizar Abbas, Shafiq Hussain, Fahad Fiyaz, M. Aslam, M. Anwar, Akbar Ali, Liaqat Ali and other staff members got performance award. The ceremonies were also held at Tehsil Level also.

PAF contingent assumes over guard duties at Iqbal’s Mausoleum

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Day was celebrated at all PAF Bases and installations with traditional zeal and fervor. The daylong celebrations started with special prayers after Fajar for the solidarity, progress and prosperity of Pakistan and the Muslim World. A Guard Mounting and Wreath Laying Ceremony was also held at the Mausoleum of Allama Muhammad Iqbal in Lahore. Air Vice Marshal Zubair Hassan Khan, Air Officer Commanding, PAF Airmen Academy, Korangi Creek was the Chief Guest on the occa-



sion. A smartly turned out contingent of the Pakistan Air Force took over guard duties from Satluj Rangers. The Chief Guest laid a floral

wreath and offered Fateha at the grave of Allama Iqbal on behalf of Chief of the Air Staff, Airmen and Civilians of Pakistan Air Force.

Governor confers Presidential awards

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shah Farman Wednesday conferred Presidential Awards to eight legendary personalities of the province. A distinguished awards ceremony on the occasion of ‘Pakistan Day’ held here at Governor House Peshawar. The ceremony was attended by Deputy Speaker Provincial Assembly Mahmood Jan, administrative heads of various departments and family members of the recipients of the Presidential Awards. Governor Shah Farman conferred the Presidential Award to Syed Mumtaz Ali Shah for his outstanding services in the field of art, drama and acting. - APP

Pakistan Day observed in Gujrat

DC Dr. Khurram said that our forefathers dreamed of an independent homeland on this day

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: Like all over the country, Pakistan Day was celebrated with dignity in Gujrats well. The main flag hoisting ceremony was held at DC Complex where special guests Deputy Commissioner Dr. Khurram Shehzad and DPO Umer Salamat hoisted the flag. A well-armed contingent of police saluted the national flag and a police band played the national anthem beautifully. ADCG Afzal Hayat Tarar, ADC Revenue Amir Shehzad Kang, AC Umer Riaz

Gondal, CEO Health Dr Naeem Akhtar Janjua, DO Civil Defense Muhammad Ashfaq, social worker Khadim Ali Khadim and People from all walks of life were also present there. DC Dr. Khurram Shehzad said that our forefathers dreamed of an independent homeland on this day which was fulfilled in the form of Pakistan under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He said, “This day is also important in the sense that the OIC meeting is being held in Pakistan. Delegations from all over the Islamic world have come to Pakistan and Pakistan is emerging as a leader of the Islamic world.” “We have been taught unity, faith, discipline, and by sticking to these golden principles we can overcome the country’s issues of economy, security and other problems,” he added.

Anti-Corruption books four

TANK: Anti-Corruption department Tank Circle, Wednesday lodged FIR against four persons including two revenue officials who According to FIR received to this scribe Dr Rehmat Shah has given application to Anti-corruption that his three Marla land record has been manipulated by his maternal uncle Israr Shah Qanoongo. The Anti-Corruption team including Assistant Director Dera Ismail Khan Abdul Hai Khan and Circle Officer Tank Abdul Rahim Khan started inquiry and sent the revenue record to Forensic Scientific Laboratory Peshawar. - Agencies

Advanced education a must, says FDA chief

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) Director General Dr Faisal Azim has said that advanced education and technology is imperative for proper rehabilitation and betterment of special children to make them active part of society. He stated this while addressing the degree degree presentation ceremony arranged by management of Danish college for special education under local



NGO Tanzeem Al Lisan. More than 70 students of Danish College for special

education were awarded the post graduation diploma in speech therapy and language by University of Education Lahore. Additional Director General FDA Rizwan Nazir, president City Anjuman Tajran Khawaja Shahid Razaq Sikka, Ch. Ijaz, Abdul Qayyum Anwar, president Tanzeem Al Lisan Dr Iftekhar Ahmed, Vice President Ch Sarfraz Ahmed, General Secretary Subhan Ali and faculty members were present in the event. FDA Director General congratulated the degree recipients and said that they could get suitable jobs by achieving this degree

FESCO chief to hold E-court on Thursday

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) Chief Executive Officer Engineer Bashir Ahmad will hold an E-court (Khuli Kutchery) on Facebook here on Thursday, March 24. FESCO spokesman said today that the open court would start at 10:30 a.m. and the FESCO Chief would listen to electricity related complaints till 12:30 pm. The electricity consumers belonging to entire FESCO region including districts Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Chiniot, Sargodha, Mianwali, Khushab. - APP

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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

GLIMPSES OF PAKISTAN DAY PARADE



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

- Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



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- MH.....561116
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- DHQ.....5556311-4
- RGH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
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- Met Office.....9250360-6
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- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480



Briefs

Pakistan Day marked with patriotism

FROM PAGE 01

"I want to make it clear to the enemy that Pakistan will never compromise on its sovereignty as the nation and its armed forces are ready to thwart any aggression," he said in his address at the Pakistan Day Parade here at the Parade Avenue, Shakarparian.

This year's annual event attained great significance as the foreign ministers of the 57-member Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) witnessed the joint services parade, where Pakistan showcased its military prowess. Prime Minister Imran Khan, cabinet members, diplomats, senior civil and military officials, and prominent figures, who have won accolades for their services to Pakistan, were present. President Alvi said the expansionist designs of Pakistan's neighbouring country was a matter of concern for the security and stability of South Asia. He mentioned India's illegal occupation in Jammu and Kashmir, and urged the international community and the United Nations to stop the ongoing human rights violations.

Referring to the country's resolve against fighting extremism and terrorism, he said, "The Pakistani nation has made immense sacrifices in the war and stood resilient against internal and external conspiracies." He lauded the valour and courage of the country's armed forces and the nation for making their homeland strong and prosperous.

Will not resign...

FROM PAGE 01

PM Imran Khan said he would not compromise on corruption under any circumstances, as he slammed PML-N and PPP for resorting to the politics of "corruption". "No one should be under the false impression that I will sit at home, I will not resign, and why should I? Should I resign due to the pressure from thieves?" he stressed. PM Imran Khan predicted that the Opposition's politics would come to an end after the no-confidence motion fails. On meeting Leader of the Opposition in the NA Shahbaz Sharif, he said: "I cannot shake hands with a person who is extremely corrupt." The prime minister said he would "never" hold a consultative meeting with Shahbaz, as he stressed that the Sharif brothers - Shahbaz and Nawaz Sharif - and Asif Ali Zardari were "corruption brands" of Pakistan. "They have no ideology," he said and asked: "Where does it happen that politicians take money to dismiss a sitting government?"

Allied parties may join Opp...

FROM PAGE 01

attempts to muster the support of coalition partners, the government fears losing the support of its allies. According to sources, three major coalition partners of the government, MQM-P, PML-Q and BAP, have decided to part ways ahead of the no-trust motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan. As per sources, all three allies of the government, including two MNAs of GDA, will soon [expectedly till March 25] announce to join the Opposition in the campaign to oust PM Imran Khan.

Can NA speaker...

FROM PAGE 01

he said that under Article 95, votes cannot be disregarded, irrespective of the consequences. He said that since the provision of the no-confidence motion has been stipulated in the Constitution of Pakistan, he has lately pondered over the issue "quite deeply." "I have come to the conclusion that since all members of the National Assembly can exercise their right to vote for or against the motion of no-confidence under the Constitution as stipulated in Article 95, votes cannot be disregarded, irrespective of the consequences," he said.

Qureshi, Kazakbaev review Pak-Kyrgyz bilateral ties

The two foreign ministers noted with satisfaction the progress made on the CASA-1000 project and expressed commitment for its timely completion, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic Ruslan Kazakbaev Wednesday reviewed the state of bilateral relations and multilateral cooperation, including matters relating to trade and investment, defence and security as well as connectivity agenda.

The two foreign ministers noted with satisfaction the progress made on the CASA-1000 project and expressed commitment for its timely completion, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The two foreign ministers met on the sidelines of the

48th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. The two sides also agreed to enhance people-to-people contacts and cooperation in the education sector. Issues related to the welfare of Pakistani students and expatriate community were discussed. The importance of regular interaction and dialogue under existing mechanisms and exchange of high-level visits to generate further momentum in the relationship was underlined.

The two sides affirmed their commitment to remain constructively and meaningfully engaged to further reinforce Pakistan-Kyrgyz bilateral relations. - APP



PM outperforms past govts on diplomatic front, says Farrukh

Highlighting the prime minister's achievements at foreign front, he said two meetings of the OIC were held in the country in the last three months



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib Wednesday said Prime Minister Imran Khan had made matchless diplomatic achievements in the last three and half years. He, in a series of tweets, said PM Imran Khan, in comparison to all the past governments, had made numerous diplomatic achievements during the last three and half years. Farrukh said it was the

first time in the history that the country got a leader who went beyond the politics of "chits" and had courage to speak [with other countries' leaders] by looking into eyes. The entire world respected the prime minister, he added. Highlighting the prime minister's achievements at foreign front, he said two meetings of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) were held in the country in the last three months. His efforts also led to the adoption of a resolution by the United Nations to designate March 15 as an "International Day to Combat Islamophobia", he added. The minister said it was the prime minister who drew attention of the whole world towards the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. He also revived the Kashmir issue at international level by becoming a "brave advocate" of the people of Kashmir. "Only PM Imran Khan can do all of this," the minister remarked. - APP



President Dr. Arif Alvi confers civil awards

The president awarded Sitara-e-Quaid e Azam to Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood for his philanthropy



DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Wednesday conferred civil awards on prominent citizens of Pakistan as well as foreign nationals for showing gallantry and excellence in their respective fields. In an impressive ceremony at the Presidential House, the president conferred Nishan-e-Imtiaz on Muhammad Naeem for his achievements in field of science (chemistry) and on Nazir Muhammad Rashid alias N.M Rashid and Majeed Amjad alias Abdul Majeed for their

achievements in literature. Dr. Inam ur Rehman (science nuclear physics), Dr. Qamar Mehboob (engineering nuclear), Tahir Ikram (engineering mechanical), Rohail Hayat (art, music, composing) and Kishwar Naheed (literature) were given Hilal-e-Imtiaz. Mohamad Azmi Abdul Hamid and religious scholar Sheikh Ahmed bin Hamad Al Khalili (Oman) were given Sitara-e-Pakistan for their services to Pakistan. Muhammad Bux Buriro, Reshma and Col. Shafi Ullah Khan received Sitara-i-Shujaat for their gallantry, while Muhammad

Akbar Khan, Iqbal Masih, Abdul Ghaffar Shaikh, Zia Hussain, Tabasum Shabbir Awan, Irfan Ahmed Durrani, Asadullah Qureshi, Muhammad Ali, Ahmed Ali, Sadiq Hussain, Nuruddin, Malik Dara Khan, Muhammad Raheem Shah, Muhammad Saeed Khan, Muhammad Waleed Sabir Khan, Waqar Ahmed, Abdul Qahhar Khan, Jamil Ahmed Kalhoro and Adnan Malik were given Tamgha-e-Shujaat. The president awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz to Dr. Syed Hussain Abidi (science), Rashid Rana (arts), Syed Aqeel Bilgrami (architecture), Mehmoodul Haq Alvi (services to humanity) and to Salman

Iqbal for promotion of sports particularly cricket. The President's Pride of Performance awards were given to Syed Tajamul Hussain (science), Prof Dr Yasir Ayaz (engineering), Shakeela Naz (artist) and Irfanullah Jan (services to humanity). The president awarded Sitara-e-Quaid e Azam to Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood for his philanthropy. Dr. Muhammad Abid, Momina Duraid Qureshi and Asad Mehmood received Tamgha-i-Imtiaz for their services in the fields of engineering, drama and environment respectively.

CDA's helpline 1819 to facilitate masses

1819 will be a front end service through ufone as CDA already has a back end soft ware made available to it by NRTC. This is another step towards making CDA a modern and efficient service delivery organisation. Its pertinent to mention here that through establishment and of a new facilitation Center all the services provided by CDA including BCS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The management of capital development authority is taking various steps to provide modern and contemporary facilities to the citizens by using latest technological solutions. In this regard, launching of help line 1819 is one such step.

This dedicated helpline will provide information on all the services provided by CDA, ICT, Excise and Taxation and ICT police. By using this help line citizens can inquire about their services and can provide feed back in this regard. Citizens can also check progress on their applications related to property transfer. Similarly help line can be used for



checking information on vehicle registration. This help line will also enable the authorities in price monitoring as citizens can register complaints in case of over pricing. 1819 will be a front end service through ufone as CDA already has a back end soft ware made available to it by NRTC. This is another step

hassle and ensures efficient & expedient service delivery.

This help line will enable third party performance audit through ufone thus enabling the management to have accessibility of performance of each section through real time dashboard.

This help line for police will be only for informational purposes and not for emergency help or complaint registration as for these there are already dedicated help lines available. The management of capital development authority believes that this help line will facilitate communication with Public and feed back will help in making CDA more responsive and efficient service delivery organisation.

Russia-Ukraine war has triggered global food crisis: Minister

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam Wednesday said that the Russia-Ukraine war had created a worldwide food crisis as the two countries exported 30 per cent of the world's wheat. "The vaccine, being imported from abroad, for curing Lumpy Skin disease in the cattle, will reach Pakistan in seven days," the federal minister told a private television channel on Wednesday.

He added that the farmers would be given subsidy for Kharif crop. "The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) has taken important decisions, including the cotton prices," he said and added that 38 per cent of the Pakistan's labour force and 53 per cent of the industry's raw materials depended on agriculture.

"The reason behind the shortage of fertilizer was its smuggling and illegal sale in the market," he maintained and added that olive trees had been planted over 36,000 acres of land under the Olive Cultivation Programme.

"Technology has a significant role in the development of agriculture for which the government is taking various steps," he said and claimed that the government was also paying special attention to increase cotton production.

"Pakistan is a major importer of soybean," he said and affirmed that the government was making all-out efforts for its cultivation at home. - DNA

J-10C fighter jets enthrall...

FROM PAGE 01

After that, the parade showcased different cultures of the four provinces with floats from Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), and Balochistan as well as Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Kashmir featuring at the event.

In Afghanistan, girls schools...

FROM PAGE 01

announced early opening of closed girls schools and institutions throughout that country. In a press statement, Hamid Karzai said that closure of schools could cause irreversible setbacks to the education sector. He said that promotion of Education is essential for making the country as progressive and prosperous.

Hamid Karzai observed that continuous closure of girls schools is beneficial to only those who intentionally want to keep Afghanistan backward and destabilized. On such grounds, Hamid Karzai asked Taliban leaders to review their Education Policies towards women and let the girls' students to resume their schooling without any further delay.

Due to closure of girls schools and other restrictions a large number of parents have left Afghanistan for Pakistan, Iran and other foreign countries along with families. One of such family reached in Peshawar some five months ago and admitted two girls and one boy in a Peshawar school. The family head Mohsin a Shia from Hazara community of Afghanistan along with father died in tragic suicide attack on March 4th 2022 last.

Imran has to go for the sake...

FROM PAGE 01

The treatment of the IDPs after our government has not been in the benefit of the country.

I have come to you once again, since we are combating a tyrant and a barbarian today. We and our Jiyalas have been facing this puppet since the first day. We called him 'selected' in the parliament on the very first day, and that is his identity before the world now. We will face this undemocratic person through democratic means. We will treat the empire's finger with the thumb by voting. I will not use any undemocratic mean to drive this puppet out. I cannot attack any institution, nor will I go to the court in a black coat. I will not go to Gate no. 4. Quaid-e-Awam has taught us 'all powers to the people', and I will chase him out with the help of the people. We continuously made efforts for the opposition to be on one page. We laid the foundation for the platform for PDM while ignoring our differences to chase him out through democratic means such as the bye-elections, Senate elections and the no-confidence.

Chinese FM meets COAS

FROM PAGE 01

world should acknowledge Pakistan's efforts towards regional peace and stability. He appreciated security provided to CPEC and said that China believes in inclusive prosperity.

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. COAS also thanked Foreign Minister for his visit and continued Chinese support to Pakistan. 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.

China's presence at OIC summit

THE attendance of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi at the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has opened a new chapter in relations between China and the Islamic world.

Wang's presence in this august Islamic meeting was a reassuring gesture that China means no harm to Muslims, contrary to the perception bandied by the U.S. and its allies.

On matters Islamic, including Arab to some extent, the writing is on the wall for the U.S. and its allies. Recent reports that talks between China and Saudi Arabia are at an advanced stage for the sale of oil in Chinese Yuan betrays the growing diplomatic tensions between Riyadh and Washington. US' "use and dump" policy is now evident and countries are evaluating whether they are at all safe with the U.S.'s double standards.

Wang noted that the two sides should strengthen coordination on issues such as Afghanistan and Ukraine, jointly practice true multilateralism, oppose power politics, bullying and unilateral sanctions, and work to help the international order advance in a more just and reasonable direction.

The strategic partnership between China and the Islamic world has added a third dimension in the current geopolitics. This partnership will definitely become powerful and help tilt the balance of power toward the side of those whose voice was hitherto muzzled or ignored. For the Muslim world, China is a genuine friend with no hegemonic interests or even tendencies. The opening up of this trading bloc will also help create markets for developing countries that have been technically closed out of the developed economies using unfair rules. Partners of both China and the OIC will plug in this vast market.

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War intensifies in Ukraine

RUSSIAN forces and Russian-backed separatist units had taken about half of the port city of Mariupol, normally home to around 400,000 people, Russia's RIA news agency said, citing a separatist leader. Street fighting was taking place in the city, and both civilians and Ukrainian troops were coming under Russian fire, said regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko.

"There is nothing left there," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in a video address to Italy's parliament. Mariupol has become the focus of the war that erupted on Feb. 24 when Russian President Vladimir Putin sent his troops over the border on what he calls a "special military operation" to demilitarise Ukraine and replace its pro-Western leadership.

Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden heads to Europe on Wednesday to meet with allies as Russia's invasion of Ukraine nears the end of its first month.

Western leaders are expected to unveil the latest round of sanctions to pressure Moscow to end the war. Biden could also announce plans for the United States to permanently maintain an increased number of troops in NATO countries near Ukraine, four people familiar with the discussions told NBC News.

The talks come after Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov refused to rule out the possibility that Russia could use nuclear weapons in the conflict, telling CNN that his country would consider doing so if it were facing an "existential threat."

How the West would respond in the event of such an escalation is expected to be on the agenda when officials meet, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy is set to address the NATO summit via video link.

A little about racism

Raza Ali

Denmark's immigration service is actively stripping Syrian refugees of their residence permits and is shamelessly deporting people back to war torn Syria, and mind you this same Denmark is more than happy to arm Syrian terrorists, and it was one of the first countries to send...

THE so-called civilized western countries miss no occasion to remind the world of how tolerant they are and how law-abiding they are, when it comes to human rights or human treatment.

Alas this is all pomp and no reality. The ongoing Russian Special Military Operation in Ukraine has exposed, or rather say lifted the last veil from the hypocritical western face. I think it is worth noting, how western European ad EU member states kept a closed eye, when it came to discrimination against Russian citizens, and people of Russian origin in various European countries. I can just quote a few examples to make the point: In Munich a private hospital issued an official statement declaring that they would not provide medical services to Russians and Belarusians. After public protest, they revoked this decision, but interestingly enough the German state authorities did not even react to such exhibitions of Russophobia. In Italy a school going Russian child was forced by the other children to stand on his knees, while they spat him

in the face and asked him to say sorry to Ukrainians. The school authorities took no punitive action against the ones who staged this act of cruelty against a child. In Berlin unknown people threw Molotov cocktails at the Russia House (cultural center), and once again no official action. I can go on and on, because the list of Russophobic attacks and inaction by western law enforcement is inexhaustible. This shows, how the "civilized" western countries in fact think about racism and ethnic discrimination. Their approach is that of a pigeon: dig your head in the sand and the cat will go away. These western nations tirelessly criticize every other country regarding violation of human rights, but conveniently sweep their own racism under the carpet.

Let me just show you another aspect of ethnic discrimination, related to treatment of refugees. For example, in 2015-2016 there was an influx of refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria. Although in the beginning Angela Merkel adopted the welcome the refugees policy and then being the shepherd of the European Union asked other states to share the burden. There were a little more than 45000 refugees who arrived in Finland. First of all refugee placement centers were attacked by ultra-right neo-Nazis, and most interestingly they never got caught. Secondly about a year later the Finnish immigration authority proudly announced that around 53% of the applications were denied and people were either voluntarily or forcefully sent back. Mind you, the reason for sending back Afghan and Iraqi citizens was that the immigration service had declared Afghanistan and Iraq war-free, whereas the ground reality was very different.

In a particular case, an Iraqi citizen was deported back to Baghdad, because the Finnish authorities thought that his claim for protection was false. A few days after he went back, this man was shot to death. His daughter was also on deportation list, but even after receiving the information about the fate of the deported man, the Finnish immigration did not overturn its decision. There were many cases, from many countries, where people were even sent back to Syria, where the war was at full blow in 2015-2016.

Now let me take you to another Scandinavian heaven called Denmark. Denmark's immigration service asked all 98 Danish municipalities to assess their capacity for taking in Ukrainian refugees.

Mind you, when these Ukrainian refugees were crossing into EU territory, they were not screened. The only criteria was skin color, and Ukrainian passport. In allowing these "refugees" the EU authorities did not even take into consideration the fact that on the second day of the Russian Special Military Operation, the Ukrainian authorities had opened the gates of all prisons and jails in Ukraine. So among these "refugees" there factually are criminals.

Then if we return to Denmark, this country has a self-declared zero-asylum policy. Under its so-called "jewelry law" the state has the right to confiscate the asylum seeker's assets, even their jewelry, to finance their stay in Denmark. This law is exercised in relation to all refugees, but the Danish government has declared that this law will not be applicable to Ukrainian refugees.

Denmark's immigration service is actively stripping Syrian refugees of their residence permits and is shamelessly deporting people back to war torn Syria, and mind you this same Denmark is more than happy to arm Syrian terrorists, and it was one of the first countries to send sophisticated weapons to Ukraine to arm Ukrainian Nazis.

The only question is, what differentiates a Ukrainian from a Syrian if both are looking for an escape from a military conflict? The Syrian risked his/her life to cross multiple borders, cross the seas in inflated boats, and starved to save his/her life. The Ukrainian "refugee" arrived into EU states on a BMW X5 or took a free train ride, sponsored by the host countries, and brought his/her branded clothes with them. This is just a minor difference.

The difference my friends is skin color, religion, and concurrence with the host country's political stance. And if I may, there is one word to describe all this, and that word is RACISM. If there is something positive about this conflict in Ukraine, it is the fact that the veil of humanity, which covered the ugly European, British, and American faces has at last fallen down, uncovering their real heinous racist faces.

Gaza suffers at the expense of growing US-UAE-Egypt ties

Robert Inlakesh

The current Egyptian president, Sisi, rose to power in a military coup that was politically supported by the US and its allies and received petrodollar backing from the UAE and Saudi Arabia. To this day, Egypt, the UAE, and Israel work closely on many regional projects

THE less visible and most pernicious part of the relationship between Egypt, Israel, and the US revolves around the besieged Gaza Strip. This week, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett announced another step forward in ties with Egypt months after his first visit to the North African country in September 2021. "Cooperation between the two countries is expanding in many areas, and this contributes to both peoples and to the stability of the region," he said, referring to the start of direct Israeli flights to Sharm El-Sheikh on Egypt's Red Sea coast from next month.

In mid-February of this year, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al Sisi won praise from the Israeli government for a special performative greeting of Tel Aviv's energy minister, Karin Elharar, at an international conference held in Cairo. Just days later, it emerged that Israel had approved a new transportation route for gas exports to Egypt. One day before Israel announced its latest move to cement ties with Egypt, the US had also approved the sale of F-15 fighter jets to the North African country. Egypt has long been one of the top recipients of US foreign aid, with the administration of US President Joe Biden contemplating sending \$1.43 billion in foreign aid to Cairo in 2022.

While Washington cancelled a \$130 million military aid package over human rights abuse concerns, it also approved a \$2.5 billion weapons sale in the same month. All this goes to say that the United States clearly values their relationship with President Sisi, and there's no wonder why. Egypt is a key player in the pro-US Middle East axis, which consists of states like Israel, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia.

The current Egyptian president, Sisi, rose to power in a military coup that was politically supported by the US and its allies and received petrodollar backing from the UAE and Saudi Arabia. To this day, Egypt, the UAE, and Israel work closely on many regional projects. Cairo and Abu Dhabi support warlord Khalifa Haftar in Libya; Israel announced in January 2020 that it would begin exporting its gas supplies to Egypt. In the September of that same year, Abu Dhabi signed a normalisation deal with Tel Aviv.

Egypt is key for the United States and its Middle East allies, as it commands one of the strongest militaries in the region and can serve as a negotiator and backer of pro-Washington hegemonic endeavours.

However, the primary reason behind the need for the US' support of Egypt, is the role it can play in facilitating Israeli security. Egypt and Israel's blockade on Gaza in 2006 following Hamas' victory in parliamentary elections intensified into a coordinated siege in 2007, after the organisation's takeover of the enclave. Whilst the democratically elected governing party in Gaza, Hamas, refuses to deal directly with Israel and vice versa, Egypt has become a key intermediary that has aided calm between the two sides. After Israel's 11-day assault on Gaza in May 2021, during which at least 260 Palestinians and 13 Israelis were killed, Egypt was widely commended for its role in facilitating the ceasefire which ended the conflict.

It was Cairo, not the United Nations or any other superpower, that did most of the heavy lifting, and as a result of the positive image won by Egypt for its efforts, the Egyptian authorities have attempted to continually build on a stable ceasefire between both Hamas and Israel. Several rounds of talks at cementing a stronger ceasefire have taken place since last year's assault, including indirect Hamas-Israel prisoner swap talks. Egypt has even stepped in to do much of the reconstruction work in Gaza, as this is one of Hamas' pre-conditions to continue holding to the ceasefire—little to ask, considering this is simply in line with the demands of international laws. Yet, as the Palestinian population in Gaza, considered by experts at the United Nations to be living in an uninhabitable area as of 2020, suffers from the brutality of the Israeli-Egyptian siege, the Egyptian involvement in using Gaza as a means of establishing legitimacy and strengthening ties with foreign powers should raise eyebrows.

Unless Egypt maintains a stable relationship with Hamas, the Gaza Strip will be on the brink of further collapse and an even greater humanitarian crisis. As one of the most densely populated areas on earth, Gaza's civilian population suffers from nearly a 50 percent unemployment rate and a decimated economy, where 69 percent of households are food insecure and dependent on international aid to survive. Gazans, roughly half of which are under the age of 18, live in an environment ravaged by four large scale military assaults, where 97 percent of their water supply is contaminated, often referred to as a slow poisoning of the population.

Whilst Israel is the main perpetrator of the blockade, Egypt's compliance, along with the destruction of a complex supply network of tunnels, has meant that it is left with no lifeline for Palestinians who are also isolated and largely unable to flee.

Therefore, the tightening of ties between Israel and Egypt comes as no simple equation of economic cooperation. Instead, it fits into a wider trend of compliance that, despite what is presented, doesn't benefit Palestinians in Gaza and works towards a US-aligned model of Middle East hegemony. Just as Palestinian political parties from across the spectrum have slammed the UAE, Bahrain, Morocco and Sudan for their normalisation deals with Israel, Egypt's advancement of ties cannot be viewed through a different lens. As two far greater powers than Hamas in Gaza, Egypt and Israel should be working towards sustainable outcomes for the Palestinian people, including ending the siege on Gaza and reviving the coastal enclave economically. However, in reality, the opposite is true.

— Courtesy: TRT World

Pakistan Resolution Day and the idea of liberty

Fatima Iftikhar Chawla

"Democracy is in the blood of the Muslims, who look upon complete equality of mankind, and believe in fraternity, equality and liberty. Respected Audience Our Nation appears with this idea of liberty that is the equal rights given to all citizens of this state to act and express according to their will

THE Quaid of this Islamic Republic quoted: "We are a nation with our own distinctive culture and civilization, language and literature, art and architecture, name and nomenclature,

sense of values and proportion, in short, in short we have our own distinctive outlook on life and of life, by all canons of international law we are a nation."

We all grew up hearing whispers of events from the past. The end of British Raj in India, saw the subcontinent dissected in to two- India and Pakistan. The 1940s tower over every decade of the 20th century as the most full of sorrow, patriotism and ultimately hope and beginning of new era.

'The day of destiny', that is Pakistan resolution day and the idea of liberty.

"O dear Patriots", achieving Pakistan was never easy. When reading or hearing about the partition, I get overwhelmed by the intensity of violence. At the hands of brutality every person was sold. Yes, Yes! Achieving a nation, where we, we Muslims could breathe fearlessly, could practice our religion, could live with our families, our loved ones was never easy... I repeat: Not Easy At All.

On 23rd March, 1940, Muslims truly gathered at a single platform and under Quaid's unwavering leadership, our forefathers saw the historical moments of creation of Pakistan.

This resolution established an independent state- Pakistan, united Muslims and gave them a sense of identity. Moreover, this resolution came up with the protection of the rights of minorities. Pakistan not only means freedom and independence but the Muslim Ideology which has to be preserved. The Father of the Nationsaid:

"Democracy is in the blood of the Muslims, who look upon complete equality of mankind, and believe in fraternity, equality and liberty. Respected Audience Our Nation appears with this idea of liberty that is the equal rights given to all citizens of this state to act and express according to their will. So, if you remember the words of our leader, then read close: "You are free, you are free to practice your religion in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed that has nothing to do with business of the state."

The concept of liberty can quiet easily be explained by an incident which took place right after- Yaum-e-Takbeer, when a young Palestinian boy, held a stone in his hand, stood in front of the Israeli army and yelled with some heart-rending words, "Don't look at the stone in my hand, look at the bomb in Pakistan, we are coming after you." These words sum up the idea and the importance of liberty which we are enjoying in our beloved homeland.

The land we belong to, the land we will die for, the land that defines our identity. This is our country. So it is our responsibility to endeavor for Pakistan's prosperity and development. People! The time has come when all of us have to vow with ourselves that - we will live with dignity and we will die with honor!

**Pakistan Zindabad!
Pakistan Paindabaad!**

Briefs

PCB inducts Waqar into PCB Hall of Fame

DNA

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Waqar Younis, who took 373 Test and 416 ODI wickets, was formally inducted into the PCB Hall of Fame when he received his commemorative cap and plaque during Wednesday's play in the third cricket Test between Pakistan and Australia at the Gaddafi Stadium. In Tests, Waqar took 50 or more wickets against New Zealand (70), Zimbabwe (62), Sri Lanka (56), West Indies (55) and England (50). In ODIs, he took 84 wickets against Sri Lanka, followed by New Zealand (79), West Indies (60), South Africa (58), India (37), England (30), Australia (29) and Zimbabwe (23). Waqar played seven Tests at the Gaddafi Stadium and took 29 wickets with seven for 86 against New Zealand in October 1990 as his best. In 12 ODIs at this iconic venue, Waqar took 14 wickets with four for 26 against the Netherlands in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 1996 as his best figures. For his meritorious services to Pakistan cricket, Waqar already has a stand dedicated in his name at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

EU for resumption of gas supply to Karabakh

BRUSSELS: The European Union called on Wednesday for an immediate resumption of gas supply to Nagorno-Karabakh. "The European Union is concerned about reports of a renewed disruption of the gas supply to Stepanakert/Khankendi, the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh, the lead spokesperson of the EU's diplomatic service, Peter Stano, wrote in a statement. The statement called on "authorities in control" to ensure the immediate resumption of the gas supply, stressing that the local population is in "an urgent need," in particular because of the dire weather conditions. The EU "will continue its engagement towards sustainable peace and stability for the South Caucasus," Stano added. Following the bloc's encouragement for "active engagement on the matter," Azerbaijan made repair works and reinsured the gas supply after the first disruption on March 8-19, the EU statement explained. - APP

Ukraine claims 15,600 Russian soldiers killed

KYIV: Some 15,600 Russian soldiers have been killed in Ukraine since the start of the war, the Ukrainian military claimed on Wednesday. Ukrainian forces have also destroyed 101 Russian aircraft, 124 helicopters, 517 tanks, 1,578 armored carriers, 267 cannons, 80 rocket launcher systems, and 47 air defense systems since Feb. 24, according to the Ukrainian General Staff. The Russian forces also lost 1,008 vehicles, four light speedboats, 70 fuel vehicles, and 42 UAVs, it added. At least 953 civilians have been killed during the war and 1,557 injured, according to UN estimates. - APP

Pakistan calls Nowruz a time of 'renewal, regeneration'

"This common heritage is a solid foundation for our friendship and cooperation with all our neighbors in the north and west, reflected in part in the ECO," he said

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has underscored the importance of Nowruz, which heralds the onset of the festive spring season, saying the event also symbolizes rebirth and the link between humans and nature. "In observing Nowruz International Day," Ambassador Munir Akram said, "we also reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the UN Charter", which is aimed at promoting peace, international cooperation and harmony. The Pakistani envoy, who was participating in the virtual

celebrations of the Day, said Nowruz is a time of renewal and regeneration. "It is the spirit we need to emerge from suffering caused by the Covid 19 pandemic," he said, adding, "It rekindles confidence that we will, together, defeat the virus and recover better, stronger and more prosperous." UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and the President of the General Assembly, Abdulla Shahid, made opening remarks at the event followed by the ambassadors of the countries sponsoring the ceremony - Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, India, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan,



Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. In his remarks, Ambassador Akram said Nowruz is a heritage that has been warmly embraced by the people of Pakistan, pointing out that

it is typically celebrated in parts of Gilgit-Baltistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially near the border with Afghanistan, and across Balochistan, with a large celebration held at Quetta.

"This common heritage is a solid foundation for our friendship and cooperation with all our neighbors in the north and west, reflected in part in the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)," he said. "Nowruz is also a reminder of the shared heritage of the glorious civilizations that spanned the Balkans, the Black Sea, Caspian Sea regions, the Caucasus, and Central and South Asia," Ambassador Akram said, noting it reflected in the art, music, architecture, literature and customs of the countries of these regions. Ambassador Akram also spoke about the need to emerge from suffering

caused by the coronavirus pandemic, saying, "we will, together, defeat the virus and recover better, stronger and more prosperous. The Pakistani envoy concluded his remarks with the words of Allama Mohammed Iqbal: "Spring clouds have pitched their tents over mountains and plains, Look! Flowers are flourishing in gardens and meadows, The spring wind blows". An estimated 300 million people worldwide celebrate Nowruz, which is also inscribed on the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Royals' Jamaica visit stirs demands for apology

LONDON: Jamaican activists protested against a visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and demanded reparations for slavery amid growing scrutiny of the British Empire's colonial legacy. Britain's Prince William and his wife Kate arrived in Jamaica on Tuesday as part of a week-long Caribbean tour. The royal couple's trip coincides with the 60th anniversary of Jamaica's independence and the 70th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. It also comes at a time of growing scrutiny of colonial-era British conduct in the Caribbean and elsewhere. "We see no reason to celebrate 70 years of the ascension of your grandmother to the British throne because her leadership, and that of her predecessors, have perpetuated the greatest human rights tragedy in the history of humankind," read a letter published Sunday ahead of the couple's visit and signed by 100 Jamaican leaders. In the letter, Jamaicans said they would be celebrating 60 years of freedom from the UK - but stressed that an apology was "necessary to begin a process of healing, forgiveness, reconciliation and compensation." "During her 70 years on the throne, your grandmother has done nothing to redress and atone for the suffering of our ancestors that took place during her reign and/or during the entire period of British trafficking of Africans, enslavement, indentured labor and colonialization," the letter added. On Tuesday, a demonstration was staged outside the British High Commission in Kingston, singing traditional songs and holding banners with the phrase "sehyuh sorry" - a local patois phrase urging Britain to apologize. - APP

MBZ, Aliyev discuss bilateral ties

BAKU: Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan phoned Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on March 22, Azertag has reported. During the phone conversation, they hailed the development of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and the United Arab Emirates, and exchanged views on the prospects for further expansion of cooperation in economic, trade, energy and other areas. Siding the conversation, the sides congratulated each other on the 230 MW Garadagh Solar Power Plant project, whose foundation had recently been laid in Azerbaijan, funded by Masdar company of the United Arab Emirates. Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan noted that the UAE is interested in developing strategic cooperation with Azerbaijan in the field of renewable energy and supporting the submitted projects. Noting that Azerbaijan has great potential in the field of renewable energy, the head of state stressed the importance of the 230 MW Garadagh Solar Power Plant, which is under construction with the investment of Masdar company. They also exchanged views on ensuring stability in the world energy market amid the events in Ukraine, and issues on international and regional agenda and of mutual interest. - Agencies

World No 1 Ash Barty quits tennis



SYDNEY: World number one Ashleigh Barty has shocked the sporting world by announcing she will retire from professional tennis at just 25. The Australian made the announcement on social media on Wednesday, saying she was leaving to "chase other dreams". She said she was "absolutely spent" and "physically I have nothing more to give". "I'm so happy

and I'm so ready. I just know at the moment in my heart, for me as a person, this is right," she said. "I know that people may not understand it. I'm OK with that. Because I know that Ash Barty the person has so many dreams she wants to chase after that don't necessarily involve travelling the world, being away from my family, from my home,

which is where I've always wanted to be." Barty won three Grand Slam singles events, including this year's Australian Open in January. In doing so she became the first home player to win the Australian Open men's or women's singles title in 44 years. She says her success in becoming 2021 Wimbledon champion "changed my perspective" because after achieving her ultimate personal goal in the sport, she still "wasn't quite fulfilled". Barty's first singles Grand Slam arrived at the French Open in 2019 and she became world number one in the same year, a position she has held for 114 consecutive weeks since. Only Steffi Graf, Serena Williams (both 186 weeks) and Martina Navratilova (156) have enjoyed longer streaks as world number one in the women's game. - Agencies



TASHKENT: Minister Of State & Chairman Board of Investment, Muhammad Azfar Ahsan during meeting with Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Mr. Furqat Sidiqov. - DNA

Uzbek-Saudi Business Council holds meeting

DNA

TASHKENT: The third meeting of the Uzbek-Saudi Business Council was held in Tashkent. The event was attended by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade Sardor Umurzakov, Minister of Investments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Khalid Al-Falih, Chairman of the Presidium of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan, co-chairman of the Business Council from the Uzbek side Adham Ikramov, Chairman of ACWA Power, co-chairman of the Business Council from the Saudi side M.A. Abunayyan, as well as First Deputy Chairman of the Uzbekstiprom Association D. Vahabov. The key topic of the event was the issues of strengthening bilateral ties between the business communities of the two countries, as a decisive factor in the further development of investment and trade and economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and Saudi Arabia. The event with an opening speech was opened by the Chairman of the Presidium of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan, co-chairman of the Business Council from the Uzbek side Adham Ikramov.

Cummins, Starc rattle Pakistan's batting line

Half-centuries from Abdullah and Azhar had put Pakistan in a strong position until Cummins and Starc struck with the ball to dismantle the hosts' batting order

LAHORE: Australia looked in control by finishing day three of the final Pakistan-Australia Test with 134-runs lead. Coming out to bat after gaining 123-runs lead, Australia score 11-0 at stumps on the third day. Australian skipper Pat Cummins and Mitchell Starc shared nine wickets to help Australia bowl out Pakistan for 268 runs after a major resistance by Babar Azam, Azhar Ali, and Abdullah Shafique. Pakistani skipper Babar took charge after Pakistan lost west-end Abdullah and Azhar in quick successions before Tea on day three of the title-deciding Test here at the Gaddafi Stadium Lahore. The skipper had scored 42 runs in 66 balls, leading his team to 227-3 before tea. But after Tea, Starc and Cummins went through the hosts' batting line to break their backbone. Babar saw his batters tumbling after regular intervals that surely built pressure on him. Fawad Alam scored 13 while Rizwan and Sajid scored a run and six respectively. Last three batters, Nauman Ali, Hasan Ali, and Naseem Shah went out for ducks. Babar survived till Starc got him trapped in his legs to take his third wicket in the innings. He scored 67 runs off 131 balls including six boundaries and a six. Cummins bagged his seventh wicket whereas Starc took four wickets. Lyon managed to take the crucial wicket of Abdullah. Half-centuries from Abdullah and Azhar had put Pakistan in a strong position until Cummins and Starc struck with the ball to dismantle the hosts' batting order. In pursuit of 391, Abdullah and Azhar performed brilliantly and scored 81 and 78 runs, respectively before getting out. After a long battle with Azhar and Abdullah, the Aussie bowlers finally managed to send the two batters back to the pavilion before tea. The two batters partnered strongly to score 150 runs together. - APP

Pakistan Day celebrated at Belarus embassy

DNA

MINSK: To commemorate the national day of Pakistan, a flag-hoisting ceremony was held at the Residence of the Embassy of Pakistan, Minsk today on 23 March 2022. The ceremony was attended by Pakistani diaspora, students and few Belarusians from different walks of life. Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan raised the national flag to the tune of national anthem of Pakistan. Addressing the participants, he delivered the message from the Prime Minister of Pakistan whereby a glowing tribute was paid to the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and that of the other leaders of the Independence Move-

ment, whose unwavering struggle culminated in freedom for the Muslims of sub-continent. Expressing the resolve to nurture Pakistan into a progressive Islamic society on the ideals of Riasat-e-Madina, the need for unity among nation during these testing times was underlined. **Pakistan embassy Indonesia** The 82nd National Day of Pakistan was celebrated on 23rd March 2022 with national fervor and enthusiasm at the Embassy of Pakistan, Jakarta, in a simple but dignified ceremony which was attended by a large number of Pakistani diaspora along with their families, friends from Indonesia and electronic and print media

representatives. The function commenced with the hoisting of the National Flag by the Deputy Head of Mission (Chargé d'Affaires) Mr. Paisal Fayyaz. Subsequently, the messages of the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, received on the occasion, were read out. H.E. Ambassador Muhammad Hassan, in his pre-recorded video message, paid homage to the founding fathers and highlighted the achievements and progress of Pakistan in the past years. The ambassador expressed resolve of the government and the people to make Pakistan economically stronger and more prosperous and to continue to make our society humane, inclusive, and tolerant.



Pakistan Day ceremonies at Moscow, New Delhi

DNA

MOSCOW: Pakistan Embassy Moscow has marked Pakistan Day today, on 23rd March 2022. A Ceremony in this regard was held at the Embassy of Pakistan, Moscow premises in which large number of Pakistani diaspora, diplomatic staff and people from different walk of life participated. The ceremony began with recitation from Holy Quran. Pakistan Ambassador to Russia HE Shafiq Ali Khan hoisted

Pakistan flag. Pakistan national anthem was played on the occasion. Special messages of the President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi and Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Imran Khan were read by Deputy Head of Mission, Mr. Summar Javed Rana and Third Secretary respectively. **Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi** Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi on Wednesday celebrated Pakistan Day with national zeal and great fervor. Aftab Hassan Khan Chargé d'Affaires raised

Pakistan's flag to the tune of the national anthem at an elegant flag-hoisting ceremony held at the Chancery's Lawns, said a news release received here. Officers and staff of the High Commission along with their families were present on the occasion. Messages of the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan were read out to the audience. Extending warm felicitations on Pakistan national day, the Chargé d'Affaires paid rich tributes to the father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and other national leaders of the Pakistan movement, who with their unwavering resolve and relentless efforts created a separate homeland for the Muslims of Sub-Continent. The Cd'A highlighted that Pakistan is playing a dignified role as a responsible democratic state in the comity of nations. The holding of the 48th meeting of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad is a clear manifestation of Pakistan's pivotal role in the Islamic World.



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Briefs

'Journey which started in 1940 was not easy'



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said on Wednesday that journey started from March 23, 1940 was not easy. How could the journey of Muslims' dreams and aspirations of India have been easy, he said in a tweet. He said the journey of this nation with maturity of spirit, courage and determination was a blessing for its leader. Fawad said now with grace of Allah Almighty, the problems were being overcome and future would be easy.

Poland expels 45 Russian diplomats

WARSAW: Poland on Wednesday expelled 45 Russian diplomats on suspicion of spying, the country's interior minister said. "Poland expelled 45 Russian spies pretending to be diplomats," Polish Interior Minister Mariusz Kaminski announced on Twitter. "With full consistency and determination, we are breaking up the agents of the Russian secret services in our country," he added. Stanislaw Zaryn, a spokesman for Poland's special services, earlier announced in a statement that the head of the Internal Security Agency has shared with the Foreign Ministry a list of 45 identified individuals, which it called them Russian special services officers and their associates, who were "enjoying a diplomatic status in Poland." "As found by the Agency, the activities of those listed in the motion for expulsion serves the objectives of the Russian undertakings designed to undermine the stability of Poland and its allies in the international arena and poses a threat to the interests and security of our country," the statement said, requesting the country's Foreign Ministry to take "decisions resulting in the urgent expulsion from our country all the requested persons." "One of individuals listed in the motion for expulsion is an officer of the Russian secret services whose activity has been unveiled during an investigation that resulted in the arrest of a Polish national on suspicion of spying on March 17, 2022," Zaryn said. Poland, an EU and NATO member, shares a border of about 529 kilometers (around 330 miles) with Ukraine. - Agencies

Germany says NATO not a party in Ukraine

BERLIN: Germany on Wednesday promised continued support for Ukraine in their war with Russia, but ruled out NATO's direct involvement in the conflict. Addressing lawmakers during a budget debate, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz warned that suggestions for a NATO peacekeeping mission or a no-fly zone in Ukraine could trigger a wider conflict. "NATO will not become a party to the war. We are in agreement with our European allies and the US on this. This is a matter of reason, and everything else would be irresponsible," he stressed. The German chancellor said Western sanctions against Russia have started to show their impact, and they may soon adopt even stricter measures if Russian President Vladimir Putin would not cease hostilities. "Putin needs to understand the truth about the war in Ukraine," he said. "The truth is that the war destroys Ukraine. But with this war, Putin is also destroying the future of Russia." Scholz renewed his call for the Russian leader to immediately cease all combat operations in Ukraine and withdraw the Russian troops from the country. - Agencies

Over 0.29m kids to be vaccinated in KP

Children moving between the two last endemic countries are vulnerable to contracting the crippling disease and therefore needs special attention and focus in terms of vaccination

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: A five-day Outbreak Response campaign (OBR-2) has been planned in 19 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa having Afghan Refugees Camps and union councils bordering Afghanistan from March 24, 2022. This was decided in a meeting held here the other day at Emergency Operations Center Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (EOC) with Deputy Coordinator EOC Zamin Khan in the chair, said a press release issued on Wednesday. Provincial Team Lead UNICEF, Dr Andrew Etsano, Provincial Team Lead WHO, Dr Gedi Mohamed, Provincial Team Lead N Stop Dr Hafizullah, Technical Focal Person EOC, Dr Imtiaz and officials of health department were also present on the occasion.

The meeting was informed that OBR-2 will be conducted in 85 Union Councils of 19 districts of the province out of which 13 districts have Afghan Refugees camps while seven districts have borders with the neighboring Afghanistan. In a brief presentation, Deputy Coordinator EOC was informed that more than 0.29 eligible children will be administered polio drops in the upcoming OBR-2 campaign in Bajaur, Bunir, Charsadda, Chitral Upper and Lower, Dir Upper and Lower, Hangu, Haripur, Khyber, Kohat, Kurram, Malakand, Mansehra, Mardan, Mohmand, Nowshera, Peshawar and Swabi. To execute the campaign a total of 1066 total teams have been constituted out of which 928 are mobile teams, 100 fixed teams, 36 transit teams and 2 roaming teams, the meeting was informed.

Likewise, to ensure quality of the campaign 266 Area Incharges have been deployed while strict security measures have been taken for safety and security of the teams. The meeting was told that all necessary operational, communications and security measures have been taken to ensure smooth conduct of the campaign. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Coordinator EOC, Zamin Khan stressed on improved coordination with district and field staff for bridging operational and communications challenges saying that OBR 2 has been planned to ensure vaccination of children living in AR camps and in the bordering union councils with Afghanistan. Zamin Khan said that children moving between the two last endemic countries are vulnerable to contracting the crippling disease and therefore needs special attention

and focus in terms of vaccination. He held an appeal to the parents to vaccinate their children in every campaign as move closer to achieving the goal of polio free Pakistan. Coordinator paid rich tributes to the frontline workers and law enforcements personal for their hard work and commitment saying that the same level of motivation was required at all levels to cleanse the environment from polio virus and protect children from lifelong paralysis. It is pertinent to mention that district Bajaur, Chitral Lower, Dir Lower, Dir Upper, Khyber, Kurram and Mohmand has union councils bordering Afghanistan whereas Buner, Charsadda, Chitral Upper, Dir Lower, Hangu, Haripur, Kohat, Malakand, Mansehra, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar and Swabi has AR camps.

PM invites Chinese investors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on invited the Chinese investors to invest in Pakistan and benefit from "attractive" opportunities in the country. In a meeting with Foreign Minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the 48th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (OIC), he also mentioned that the ongoing second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) would reinforce Pakistan's efforts for economic development with enhanced cooperation in areas such as industrial development, agriculture, and information technology. Imran Khan warmly welcomed State Councillor Wang Yi to Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday quoting an official statement. The PM and state councillor discussed the current trajectory of bilateral ties and the evolving regional and international scenario. PM Khan fondly recalled his recent visit to China for the opening ceremony of the Beijing Winter Olympics and his meetings with the Chinese leadership.

Pakistan announces zero death for first time

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported zero Covid death for the first time in the past two years, National Command and Operation Centre (NOC) head Asad Umar said on Wednesday. The planning and development minister tweeted, "Alhamdulillah no covid related deaths reported in the country in the last 24 hours. This is the first time in 2 years that this has happened." According to the government's database, as many as 443 fresh Covid cases were reported in the country when 34,476 samples were tested in the last 24 hours. The positivity rate was recorded at 1.28 per cent. The country's tally of confirmed cases is 1,522,862 while the death toll is 30,333. The number of critical Covid-19 patients in various hospitals across the country has come down to 455. Of late, the National Command and Operation Centre announced withdrawal of all Covid-19 related restrictions in Pakistan.

Air Chief leads PAF fly past



ISLAMABAD: Air Chief Marshal Zabeer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force led the formations of PAF and PN fly-past aircraft on the auspicious occasion of Pakistan Day Parade. The Air Chief flew over the venue in an F-16 Block 52 aircraft performing a magnificent climb over the parade square. The fascinated audience fervently watched and went ecstatic to see the aircraft of the Air Chief disappearing in the sky. On this momentous day, the history is also marked by the debut participation of J-10C fighter aircraft in the fly past. Induction of J-10C aircraft in PAF is a major milestone which would further boost operational capabilities of Pakistan Air Force. The fly-past also showcased aerial display by JF-17s, F-16s, Mirages, F-7P, F-7PG, J-10C, Karakoram Eagle, Saab-2000 Eerie Eye and PAF Academy Aerobatics team "Sherdil". - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Chinese State Councillor Wang Yi, and others witness Pakistan Day Parade. - DNA

Justice Isa expresses reservations over SC larger bench

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Judge of the Supreme Court, Justice Qazi Faiz Isa has expressed his reservations over the formation of a larger bench which will hear the presidential reference that seeks interpretation of Article 63-A. According to details, Justice Isa on Wednesday wrote a letter to Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial in which he expressed his reservations over the formation of the larger bench. He raised some questions. Justice Isa objected that since the entire nation's eyes were on the presidential reference, but no consultation was held with the senior judges of the apex

court before formation of the bench. Moreover, the senior judges have been ignored and they have not been made part of the bench, the epistle read. It further said that rules were not followed and judges who were on the 4th, 8th and 13th number in the seniority list were included in the larger bench. Where the legal and constitutional affairs are involved, senior judges are to be included in the bench, the letter said. Justice Isa sent the copy of the letter to the attorney general of Pakistan, Supreme Court Bar Association president, SC judges and advocate generals of all provinces. In the letter, Justice Isa also objected to the appointment of a civil servant as registrar of the court. In my view, the registrar's appointment is illegal, he wrote in letter. He said he thought twice before writing this letter. He said the Supreme Court had clubbed together the presidential reference and the SCBA application. But they could not be clubbed together and the apex court should hear them separately. The SCBA application has been filed under Article 184(3) while the presidential reference is consultative, the letter added.

Bilawal felicitates nation on Pakistan Day

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has felicitated the nation on Pakistan Day. In a statement on Wednesday, the PPP chairman said in his message that this day reminds us of our elders, who set a goal in the form of Pakistan Resolution and remained democratic for achieving the goal. He said that the PPP has been following the footprints of Quaid-e-Azam M. A. Jinnah from day one of inception of Pakistan till date. "Quaid-e-Azam Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has the credit of offering unanimous constitution and had laid the foundation for a nuclear programme." The PPP Chairman said that since the country is passing through most tedious situations and hence violations of the constitution are very high as was in past but now the people will never allow this to happen with their unity, endurance and collective thoughts of maturity regarding true democracy. - APP

Qureshi meets Palestinian Foreign Minister

STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi met the Palestinian Foreign Minister, Dr. Riyad Al Maliki, on sidelines of the 48th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. The Foreign Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's unequivocal support for the rights of Palestinian people and their just struggle. He underscored that Pakistan's principled position reflected the sentiments of Pakistani people. Foreign Minister Malik expressed gratitude for Pakistan's unwavering support and principled stance on Palestine, including at the UN and OIC. The two Foreign Ministers also reviewed the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Palestine, in addition to exchanging views on regional and international issues. In his meeting with the Palestinian foreign minister Tuesday, the President said that Pakistan had consistently extended support to the Palestinian cause and wanted the resolution of the issue in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

Putin plans to attend G20 summit: Ambassador

"The G20 is the main forum for international economic cooperation," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters

DNA

JAKARTA: President Vladimir Putin plans to attend a G20 summit later this year in Indonesia, Moscow's envoy said Wednesday, dismissing suggestions Russia could be excluded from the group over the war in Ukraine. A day earlier, the United States indicated it would consult allies over Russia's membership in international forums to increase pressure over the invasion of Ukraine, which has prompted a refugee crisis in Europe and roiled global markets. Russian Ambassador to Indonesia Lyudmila Vorobieva said G20 host Jakarta had already invited Putin to the November heads of state summit in Bali. "It will depend on many things, including the Covid situation that is getting better. But, so far yes, the intention

is [for Putin] to come," she told reporters on Wednesday. Vorobieva said there have been attempts by Western countries to expel Russia from world organisations, including the Group of 20 major economies, calling it a "disproportionate" reaction. Russia, she added, appreciates Indonesia's "firm position", after Jakarta repeatedly said the forum was for resolving economic problems. China on Wednesday also dismissed suggestions Russia could be excluded, saying the country was an "important member" of the G20. Beijing has provided a level of diplomatic protection as Russia finds itself increasingly isolated, and its economy tied up by Western sanctions. "The G20 is the main forum for international economic cooperation," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told reporters.

"Russia is an important member, and no member has the right to expel another country." Indonesia, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the G20, has said it will keep the November forum focused on its initial objectives, implying it was planning to keep Russia's invasion of Ukraine largely off the agenda. "Of course, the expulsion of Russia from this kind of forum will not help these economic problems to be resolved. On the contrary, without Russia, it will be difficult," said Vorobieva. "We really hope that the Indonesian government will not give in to the horrible pressure that is being applied to not only Indonesia, but so many countries in the world by the West." White House National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Tuesday said Washington would consult with allies about Russia's G20 membership.

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