



Islamabad POST

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Agreement in Vienna nuclear negotiations 'close', says Iran

Detailed News On Page-08

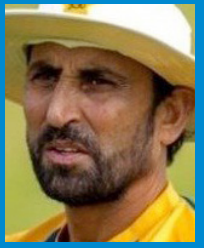
Ch Sarwar blasts PTI leadership

Detailed News On Page-08



Legend Younis Khan joins Afghan Cricket

Detailed News On Page-06



Supreme Court takes suo moto NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DISSOLVED

PM, Cabinet cease to hold office; Imran Khan may continue till the election of the caretaker prime minister; fresh election should be held in three months; the legality of the decision has raised many questions

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday announced that he had advised the President to dissolve the assembly, paving way for the holding of fresh elections in the country. Upon his advice, the President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi dissolved the National Assembly. PTI government is expected to dissolve the KP assembly as well. The fate of Punjab Assembly also hangs in the balance. The actions of the Speaker, PM and the President have raised many legal questions. Most of the legal experts have termed the action against the law.

The prime minister in his short-televised address to the nation made an announcement, soon after the National Assembly session was prorogued by the deputy speaker, rejecting the opposition's push for the no-trust motion as unconstitutional. The prime minister asked the nation to get prepared for the fresh elections as he had sent a summary, advising the president to dissolve the assembly. He said the process for holding of new elections and procedure for the caretaker government would take place accordingly.

The prime minister, while expressing his resolve, said the nation would not allow the corrupt elements to decide their fate. "The grave conspiracy against the government has failed," he added. The prime minister congratulated the nation on the deputy speaker's ruling against the no-trust motion, terming it unconstitutional as it was an effort at changing of the regime through a foreign planned conspiracy and under a foreign agenda.

"The speaker has rejected the move and I felicitate the whole nation," he said, adding that he knew that the nation was concerned over such conspiracy. "Ghabrana Nahi Hai (do't get worried), it is my message to the conspirators," the prime minister said while addressing his political foes in his popular coined phrase. The prime minister said Pakistan came into being on 27th of Ramazan. The nation would foil such plans. He also justified the deputy speaker's ruling. He said the opposition leaders should have spent their ill-gotten pelf on the provision of facilities to



Opposition is shocked by my surprise: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that the motion of no-confidence was deemed as an international conspiracy by the NSC, so it had to be rejected. Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that the opposition is in shock at the government's surprise. If he told about his strategy beforehand then the opposition might not have been in such pain, he added. The PM said that the National Security Council (NSC) had clearly said that there was an international conspiracy behind the no-confidence move. Security officials including the Army Chief were a part of the NSC meeting in which the letter was disclosed, the message given to our embassy official was also discussed in the NSC meeting, he added. Imran Khan said that the turnout MNAs who left our party did not do it on their own, they were bought with huge amounts of money by external forces. Why were these MNAs meeting with foreign embassy officials? the PM asked. Earlier, the National Assembly session to vote on the no-trust motion was prorogued after Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri ruled to reject the no-trust motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan over having links with the foreign conspiracy. - DNA

PM, President action linked to SC verdict

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court (SC) on Sunday adjourned the hearing on the plea against the ruling of NA deputy speaker Qasim Suri until Monday. National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri termed the no-confidence motion against the premier "unconstitutional", saying that it was backed by "foreign powers". A three-member bench of the SC headed by CJP, Justice Umar Ata Bandial comprising Justice Ejazul Ahsan and Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar.

The court, after hearing the preliminary position on the petition against the NA deputy speaker's ruling, issued notices to the Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Khalid Jawed Khan, secretaries home and defence. The SC gave clear instructions that the judges will decide to take notice of what happened in the assembly. All state institutions should refrain from taking any illegal action. The law and order situation should not deteriorate. All political parties should ensure law and order.

Later, the SC adjourned further hearing of the case till tomorrow. It is to be noted that President Arif Alvi has dissolved the National Assembly on the advice of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Earlier, NA deputy speaker Qasim Suri had rejected the no-confidence motion declaring it 'unconstitutional'. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday in an Address to the Nation announced to dissolve of the assemblies. Immediately after Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri ruled to reject the no-trust motion from the opposition parties against Prime Minister Imran Khan, over having links with the foreign conspiracy, the prime minister announced the dissolution of assemblies in an address to the nation. The prime minister in his address called the no-trust motion against him a 'foreign agenda' and congratulated the nation over the motion rejected in the National Assembly. "It was a foreign agenda, I want to tell the people don't get disturb that God is looking over the nation," PM Imran Khan said. - DNA

the poor instead of bribing the members of the assembly to switch their party allegiance. Earlier, Deputy Speaker of National Assembly Qasim Suri rejected the vote of no-confidence motion moved by the joint opposition against Prime Minister Imran Khan, on the basis of Article 5 of the Constitution of Pakistan, under which loyalty to the state was the basic duty of every citizen. The deputy speaker in his ruling said the no-confidence motion should be in line with the Constitution, laws and rules. "No foreign power has the right to topple an elected government under any conspiracy. So I give the ruling that (the) no-confidence resolution is against the national integrity and sovereignty and I give the ruling to disallow the no-confidence resolution as per rules and law."

Imran identified as PM
PTI Chairman Imran Khan has been de-identified as the prime minister of Pakistan, a statement from the Cabinet Division said Sunday after the dissolution of the National Assembly. But under Article 224 of the Constitution of Pakistan - once a notification is issued - Imran Khan can continue as the prime minister for 15 days till the appointment of a caretaker prime minister. There is still, however, no clarity over how a caretaker prime minister will be appointed as the National Assembly has been dissolved - and the people who appoint the person, Opposition leader in the National Assembly and the premier, are no longer in office.

Speaker, PM, President committed 'treason'

Bilawal Bhutto says we have proved that the majority is with us

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in conversation with a private television channel has said that the PM, Speaker, Deputy Speaker, President and anybody involved in this act today have committed high treason. There is no space in our constitution for them to dissolve the assembly, issue a notification to dissolve the assembly while we bring a vote of no-confidence against the PM. There is no space in the constitution for them to not hold the vote of no-confidence today. There is no space in the constitution, rules of the National Assembly, democracy and law that allows them to run from the session today. We are recording our protest in the Parliament. We have demanded of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and all those institutions responsible for the protection and implementation of the constitution to do so and accept our no-confidence that is legal. It was their own decision to have Ayaz Sadiq on the panel of the Chair. Following the policy of the House, Ayaz Sadiq has chaired the session of the National Assembly. When the Speaker is not present, neither is the deputy Speaker, it is the responsibility of the one nominated on the panel to conduct the session. The vote of no-confidence took place and we secured 195 votes. We hope that our judiciary will not let any unconstitutional act take place.



Responding to the questions of the panelists, Chairman PPP said that when such a grave attack has been made on the constitution, we expect for the Supreme Court to correct it. The PM has committed treason to run from the no-confidence. We have proved that the majority is with us. We will not let Pakistan be run on the rule of the jungle. The PM and Speaker are not even aware of how grave the act they have committed is. Raza Rabbani, Farooq Naek, Nayyer Hussain Bukhari along with others are preparing a petition. The opposition is ready for elections. It is not possible for the Supreme Court to not stand with us. It is bound to stand with and defend the constitution. We submitted a no-confidence motion against the Speaker too after which he cannot even prorogue the session. Our position now is that the no-confidence has been completed and Imran Khan has ceased to be the prime minister of Pakistan. Imran Khan is trying to become a carbon copy of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. It is ridiculous. Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto never abrogated the constitution. We were the ones who drafted it.

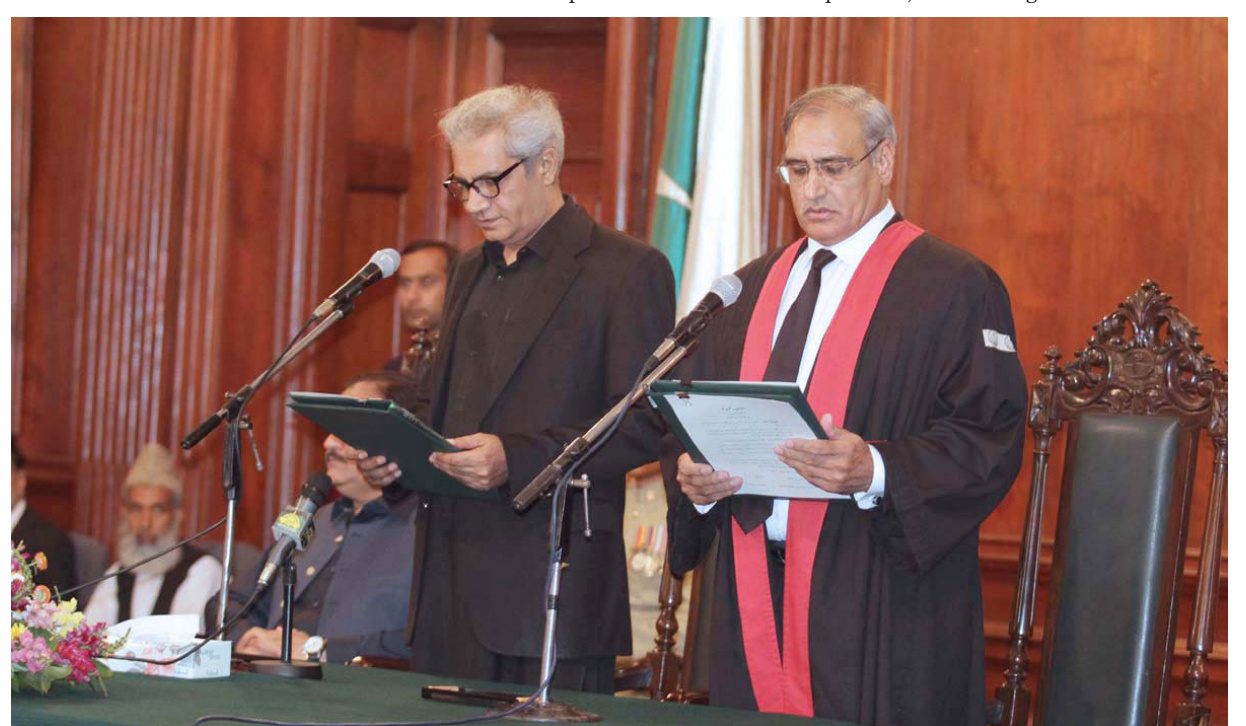
Cheema replaces Sarwar

DR KHALID

LAHORE: The federal government has sacked Punjab Governor Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar as political tensions reach a pinnacle ahead of the vote on the no-trust motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan. Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry announced the government's decision on his official Twitter account. "The announcement regarding new Punjab governor will be made later, while deputy speaker of [provincial assembly] will be the acting governor in the meantime," Fawad wrote. Meanwhile, veteran PTI worker Umar Sarfraz Cheema has been appointed as the new Punjab governor. Fawad Ch announced this decision in his Tweet. - DNA

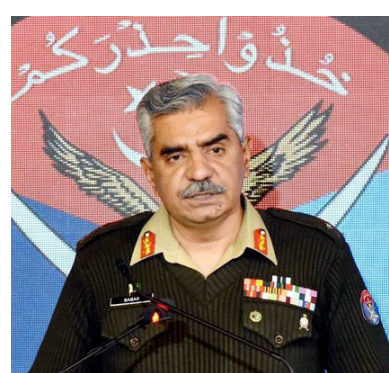
Constitution violated: Shahbaz

ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan and his minions have violated the constitution, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Shehbaz Sharif stated on Sunday. He was talking after Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri ruled to reject no-trust motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan over having links with the foreign conspiracy. The President dissolved the assembly after Prime Minister Imran Khan sent him a summary for it. "Imran Khan has now come under the grip of Article 6," Shehbaz claimed. "The house has proved that Imran has been defeated," he said. "There is no government in the country now and a gang of constitution violators have occupied it," Shehbaz Sharif alleged. "Imran Niazi is no more prime minister how can he use this constitutional authority," he questioned. "The constitution has been attacked to prolong the personal rule," he further claimed. "The country has been pushed towards anarchy," he said. - DNA



LAHORE: Chief Justice Lahore High Court Mr. Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti administering oath from the newly appointed Punjab Governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema during Oath Taking Ceremony at Governor House. - APP

Military has nothing to do with whatever happened: DG ISPR



NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The military has nothing to do with what happened today, Director-General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Major General Babar Iftikhar Sunday told Geo News after the country witnessed a political rollercoaster ride within the span of a few hours. Replying to a question regarding the in-

volvement of the Army in the political developments of the day, the DG ISPR bluntly denied any sort of involvement and said: "absolutely not". The DG ISPR's comments on the ongoing political situation came after President Arif Alvi approved the dissolution of the National Assembly on the advice of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Before this, the NA deputy speaker ruled to adjourn the session held for voting on the no-confidence motion against PM Imran Khan, terming it "unconstitutional." According to sources, elections will be held within a period of 90 days. In a brief address to the nation after the no-confidence motion was rejected, the premier congratulated the nation and said that he had sent a proposal to the President to dissolve the NA and the nation should prepare for the next elections.

Punjab Assembly session adjourned without voting

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: A session of the Punjab Assembly (PA) was on Sunday adjourned till April 6 (Wednesday) without voting to elect the new leader of the house amid ruckus by opposition and government lawmakers. The provincial assembly was to

vote today to elect the new leader of the house, with PML-Q's PTI-backed Chaudhry Parvez Elahi and PML-N's Hamza Shehbaz, who had secured the support of Jahangir Khan Tarin (JKT) group, expected to go head to head in the race to become the next chief minister.

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

'Adjournment of today's session was unlawful'

DNA

KARACHI: Central Information Secretary of PPP and member of the National Assembly Shazia Atta Marri has said that the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly Qasim Suri has adjourned today's session of the National Assembly without tabling no-trust motion was an unconstitutional and illegal move of the Deputy Speaker which was serious violation of the constitution of Pakistan.

Ms Marri added that Prime Minister Imran has lost his majority in the National Assembly during the vote of no-confidence against him filled by the opposition and the dissolution of the assemblies on his advice was sheer violation of the constitution of the Pakistan.

This she said in a statement issued hereon today. Shazia Marri said that it was the duty of the Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri to conduct voting on the no-confidence motion against the Prime Minister, but he resorted to Article 5 of the Constitution of Pakistan and it was also constitutional responsibility of the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly to conduct voting according to the constitution but he deviated the constitution of Pakistan.

14 held, 45 shops sealed for overcharging

FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Zahid Husain said that out of 3.49 million bags of urea and 2.29 million bags of DAP fertilizers were supplied to registered dealers, besides arresting 14 dealers on overcharging in Faisalabad division during the last 4 months.

Chairing a meeting on Saturday, he said that out of 3,497,608 bags of Urea fertilizer, 3,369,732 bags were distributed among farmers at government fixed rates while remaining bags would also be sold out on subsidized rates. Similarly, 1,598,104 bags, out of 2,292,246 bags of DAP were sold out so far, whereas, remaining quantity of fertilizers was under distribution process, he added. He said that monitoring teams were fully active across the division to ensure the sale of fertilizers at government fixed rate. In this connection, cases were also registered against 71 fertilizer dealers for overcharging, in addition to arresting 14 accused. Shops of 45 dealers were also sealed, besides imposing a total fine of Rs 4.904 million on profiteers during the same period, he added. - APP

36 Ramazan bazaars set up in division

FAISALABAD: Thirty-six Ramazan bazaars have been set up across the division including 19 in Faisalabad district, eight in Jhang, five in Chinot and four in Toba Tek Singh. In a statement issued on Saturday, Director Livestock Dr Haidar Ali Khan said that all necessary arrangement had been completed for the distribution of poultry items in Ramazan bazaars on subsidised rates. He said that chicken meat would be available at discount of Rs. 12 per kg from market rate whereas eggs would be sold out at a decrease of Rs. 6 per dozen from market price. - APP

COURT NOTICE

In the court of Mis Mehwish shazadi Sahiba Civil Judge Jhelum
Title: Zaib ul Nisa VS Zahida parveen etc

Advertisement Name: Defendant no(1)Zahida parveen Widow (2)Mohsin kamal son (3)Kashmala ja-been (4)Parwsha Daughter Nasir r/o House num 15 st num 10C Block B city housing Society jhelum

Claim: Application under section 195/476 etc

As there is not possible to call the defendant's through Summon in the instant case so through proclamation in Newspaper, you are directed to appear or legal advisor in the court on 05-04-2022 at 8:00AM, otherwise ex-parte proceedings will be initiated.

Qamar Zaman Kaira hosts dinner for PDM leadership



ISLAMABAD: Senior PPP leader and former Information Minister Qamar Zaman Kaira hosts dinner for PDM leadership. The entire PDM leadership including PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Mian Shehbaz Sharif, JUI Chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman, BAP leadership, MQM leaders, and all MPs attended the dinner. - DNA

Assembly proceedings cannot be challenged in the SC: Aitzaz Ahsan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PPP leader Chaudhry Aitzaz Ahsan has said that the proceedings of the Assembly can not be challenged in the Supreme Court, but if the no-confidence motion is deemed as a resolution then the Deputy Speakers' ruling can be overturned.

Talking to a private news channel, Aitzaz Ahsan said that if the motion of no confidence was elevated to a resolution then the speaker did not have any right to reject the motion. It's up to the Supreme Court to decide if the ruling was just or not, he added. The Pakistan People Party veteran said that the government did not seem constitutionally correct. It's up to

the Supreme Court to interpret the situation and decide accordingly, he added. Aitzaz Ahsan said that there has been a precedence of restoration of assemblies by the Supreme Court. Nawaz Shareef's government in 1993 was restored by 12 judges, five weeks after its dissolution by the country's President, he recalled.

He added that the proceeding of the assembly is exempted from any legal action but it is up to the Supreme Court's prerogative to interpret the situation. If the Supreme Court rules that the motion had been elevated to a resolution then it can not be rejected at any cost, he said. If the ruling is overturned then the motion would automatically be restored, Aitzaz added.

How diamond industry works

NOMAN KHAN

IT'S time to learn and understand exactly how the diamonds industry works and how the diamonds game works. These days there are two types of diamonds the natural ones and the other one is synthetic diamond also known as CVD diamonds or lab created diamonds. The diamond quality varies and it has different colors, it goes from D the whitest till Z which is yellow. Then comes the Clarity of the diamond which is FL which is flawless not a single spot can be spotted in the diamond, VVS, VS, SI etc. The natural diamond is more expensive but its also the dirtier one, the natural diamond SI 2 really is a lab created diamond of VS. All the lab created diamonds are VS quality diamonds. Now the interesting thing is that when we are comparing white diamonds with white diamonds, the lab created diamond is less expensive than the natural diamond even in the natural i. In reality there's no need to get an i1 over a VS lab but the other interesting thing you want to understand that the pink lab created diamond is just as valuable or more valuable than a natural white diamond i1 SI2. So just because it's a lab or otherwise known as a CVD that doesn't mean its one thing or another. You really need to understand how the diamond industry works.

KP Prisons IG hails holding of sports festival

He expressed these views on the occasion of passing out parades of youths at Prisoners Staff Training Academy

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Prisons Khalid Abbas Khan Sunday said that training of soldiers on modern lines was an important requirement for making prisons a truly public facilitating department. The role of prison staff

was of utmost importance for the benefit of the people, he said and added that the sports festivals have also been organized in different jails of the province to provide mental development and recreational opportunities to the inmates of the jails. Hundreds of inmates were completing different educational degrees including Masters, Nazra and Matric every year, which will lead to a positive change in attitudes after their release from prisons. The IG promised that he would do his best to bring this academy on par with the national academy of other forces. He expressed these views on the occasion of passing out parades

of youths at Prisoners Staff Training Academy, Haripur and later on a visit to Central Jail, Haripur. On his arrival at the academy, the prison police saluted the IG prisons where the Prisons Chief also distributed certificates and prizes among the young men who completed the course and showed excellent performance. On the occasion of his visit to Central Jail, Haripur, the Prisons IG inspected the barracks of women prisoners, listened to their problems and distributed Ramzan packages among them. Apart from inspecting the children's premises, they also distributed clothes and cash among the children. - APP

DPO Gujarat transfers SHOs

STAFF REPORT

KHARIAN: Inspector Liaqat Hussain SHO Police Station President Sarai Alamgir
Inspector Sarfarz Ahmed SHO Dinga Police Station
Inspector Altaf Gohar SHO Shaheen Police Station
Sub Inspector Farastullah SHO Kakrali Police Station
Sub-Inspector Tauqeerul Hassan SHO Police Sta-

tion President Lala Musa
Sub Inspector Mujahid Abbas SHO Police Station Civil Line
Sub Inspector Ehsanullah SHO Saddar Kharian Police Station
Sub Inspector Bilal Naeem SHO Police Station A Division
Sub Inspector Adnan Abbas SHO Lari Ada Police Station
Sub Inspector Atiq Ahmed posted as PSO to DPO

ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD
ADMISSION SPRING 2022
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- Forestry Extension
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- Sustainable Environmental Design

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- Entrepreneurship
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- Computer Science
- Human Resource Management
- TEFL
- EPM
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- Islamic Studies Shariah
- Islamic Studies Seerah Studies
- Islamic Studies Interfaith Studies
- Pakistan Studies
- Arabic
- Islamic Studies Quran and Tafseer
- Islamic Studies Hadith & Hadith Science
- Islamic Studies Dars-e-Nizami

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- Hadith and Seerah

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- Associate Degree in Commerce (BCOM)
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- HRM
- Marketing

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- ATTC
- E-Commerce Skills & Online Courses (Offered in Collaboration with BF Technologies)
- Virtual Assistant (Wholesale) - Amazon
- Virtual Store Manager - Daraz
- Shophy Drop Shipping
- Virtual Assistant (Private Label) - Amazon
- Virtual Trader - Alibaba
- Facebook Executive Marketing

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- MA Teacher Education
- MA EPM
- MA Special Education
- MEQ (One Year) with following Specializations:
 - Elementary Teacher Education
 - Secondary Teacher Education
 - Distance & Non Formal Education
 - Science Education
 - Special Education
- BEQ (1-1/2 Years): Eligibility: H/M/BS or BA Hons (4 Years) Minimum Second Division (equal in education)
 - Science Education
 - Elementary Teacher Education
 - Secondary Teacher Education (Self Based)
 - Secondary Teacher Education (Self Based)
 - Secondary Teacher Education (Self Based)
 - School Leadership & Management
- BEQ (4 Years): Eligibility: H/M/BS or BA Hons (4 Years) Minimum Second Division (equal in education)
 - Elementary Teacher Education
 - Secondary Teacher Education
 - Secondary Teacher Education (Self Based)
 - Secondary Teacher Education (Self Based)
 - Secondary Teacher Education (Self Based)
 - School Leadership & Management

AVAILABILITY OF ADMISSION FORMS:

- Prospectuses of all the programmes are available at University Website.
- Fresh/Continuing Students are required to enroll ONLINE <https://online.aiou.edu.pk> latest by 18 April, 2022.
- Fee should be deposited in any branch of ABL, MCB, FWBL and UBL. It can also be deposited through UPI, EasyPaisa and JazzCash. Fee can be deposited on same day after generating Challan.

DIRECTOR ADMISSIONS
Email: adm@aiou.edu.pk | Helpline: (051) 111 112 468

National Days and Armed Forces Days

APRIL

- April 04 / Senegal National Day
- April 07 / W. H. O. World Health Day
- April 12 / Somalia Armed Forces Day
- April 15 / DPR Korea The Day of the Sun
- April 16 / Denmark National Day
- April 17 / Iran Army Day
- April 17 / Syria Independence Day
- April 18 / Zimbabwe Independence Day
- April 24 / Holy See Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate
- April 25 / DPR Korea Armed Forces Day
- April 26 / Tanzania National Day
- April 27 / Sierra Leone Independence Day
- April 27 / South Africa Freedom Day
- April 30 / Sweden Birthday of His Majesty
- April 30 / Netherlands Birthday of Queen



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



ISLAMABAD: Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin, Minister of Plantation Industries & Commodities Malaysia speaking during a dinner hosted by Charge d Affaires of the Malaysian High Commission Dedy Faisal. – DNA

Australian HC extends well wishes on Ramadan-ul-Mubarak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australia's Acting High Commissioner to Pakistan, Joanne Frederiksen has extended her heartfelt well wishes to all Muslims in Pakistan, Australia, and around the world on Ramadan-ul-Mubarak. In a special message, she said, "As Muslims in Pakistan, back home in Australia, and across the world begin the holy month of Ramadan, I want to wish you all Ramadan Kareem". According to a press release issued by the Australian Embassy here Sunday, the Acting High Commissioner said, Ramadan with its daily Iftars and Sehris is a month-long opportunity for people and communities to come together in peace, a spirit of equality and respect. It's a time to reflect on the values of compassion, charity and selflessness, she added.

CGH holds free medical camps

RAWALPINDI: Cantonment General Hospital (CGH) organized separate free medical camps for heart and skin diseases patients during last week. According to RCB spokesman, on the occasion, Administrator CGH Brig. © Hassan Ibraheem and Deputy Administrator Dr Attique ud Din, doctors and paramedical staff were present. Renowned Cardiologist Dr Hamdan Waqas and his team checked up over 186 patients and provided free medicines. Several medical tests of a large number of the patients were also conducted. CGH also organized a separate free medical camp for patients of skin diseases. – APP

Satrang Art Gallery celebrates "A DECADE"

"fifteen minutes in your gallery and our view of Pakistan changed", adding he said we are playing our part in promoting the right image of our country and its talented people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Satrang Art Gallery Sunday celebrated its ten years anniversary with the participation of more than 500 artists from all over the country, as well as international artists. Talking to media, the curator's said, "We are delighted and proud to welcome all to "A DECADE" Satrang Gallery's ten year anniversary exhibition". A DECADE exhibits the work of 500 of our artists, chosen by our entire team, past and present assistant curators. Honouring the artists we have worked with, the show highlights

the transformation and change these artists have undergone, professionally, personally, and the evolution they have witnessed, within them or around them, over the last 10 years. A decade is a long and abundant time, Satrang has grown over the last 10 years, and so have each of us. It has been a privilege for me to have been the lead curator of Satrang gallery since its inception and work with extraordinary artists and exceptional colleagues with whom we have built strong relationships. We have always focused on cutting edge, dynamic and quirky art with strong conceptual backing and artistic training. The gallery prides itself on displaying differ-

ent genres of art including film, new media, performance, sculpture, photography and paintings, and this current exhibition is no exception. I am proud that each of the artists in this exhibition has risen to the challenge and created a unique piece especially for our anniversary exhibition. Ten years ago, with the unwavering support of Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels and a strong vision of a gallery dedicated to emerging artists which celebrated their artistic prowess and individuality. He said its been providing a platform to showcase their talent and support them in achieving greater visibility. Young artists who showed with us as young graduates

went on to win international accolades and fame. Satrang is now a leading gallery in Pakistan and we have been privileged to have worked with as we have built strong bridges between artists and visitors, and are grateful for our loyal audience. We have been engaged with the diplomatic community and other visitors in the capital city giving them an insight into Pakistan's vibrant art scene. We feel fulfilled when we receive comments in the gallery's visitor book that say "fifteen minutes in your gallery and our view of Pakistan changed", adding he said we are playing our part in promoting the right image of our country and its talented people.

THE CONFIDENCE OF PEOPLE IS IN NAYA PAKISTAN

The whole nation stands behind its Prime Minister

whose vision has never been for next elections, but always for benefit of next generations.

Qaumi Sehat Card Rs. 1 Million health insurance for every family	Ehsaas Program Rs. 14000 quarterly for 8 Million deserving families	10 Billion Tree Tsunami Planting of 10 billion trees to combat climate change. A project recognized by the world.	Roshan Digital Account Investment worth \$2494 Million by Overseas Pakistanis in Naya Pakistan Certificates	Kamyab Pakistan Program Rs.1400 billion interest free business, agricultural and home loans	Despite Global Pandemic, in only 3 Years 5.5 Million New Jobs	Legislation for women's inheritance rights	Scholarships worth Rs. 47 billion distributed among 6.3 million students
4 bumper crops Extra income of Rs. 1100 billion for farmers	Establishment of PANAHAHs for labourers and daily wagers	Impregnable Defense Inclusion of J10C in Pak Air Force	Strong voice against Islamophobia and success at UN level	Effective handling of Covid -19 under NCO	Nation's \$11 billion saved in Reko diq case	Independent Foreign Policy and 1st ever National Security Policy	Kamyab Jawan Program at a cost of Rs. 100 billion



Briefs

Urgent need for export oriented strategies stressed

ISLAMABAD: (APP)-Business community Sunday stressed the urgent need for evolving more export oriented strategies to achieve \$30 billion export target by the end of current fiscal year.

Chairing a round table conference on "Pakistan Export Strategic" organised under the aegis of intellectuals council of Pakistan headed by Ms Rameen, former senior Vice President Lahore chamber Meher Kashif Younis said export strategy must involve better integration with regional and global markets and it is also imperative to make domestic business globally competitive.

He said export growth must accompany improvement in productivity levels of domestic manufacturers as they capture a greater share in the world market. He said lack of capabilities of Pakistani manufacturing firms is reflected in productivity growth rates.

He said textile sector form the backbone of Pak exports and generate much needed inflows, the lack of diversification in exports has often prevented sustainable growth in total exports, he added.

He said local producers must adhere to innovations to ensure that the input mix involving foreign inputs help boost exports, government policy makers often link free trade agreements with export potential not realising that FTA can help business achieve a better mix of foreign inputs and help improve productivity levels.

Meher Kashif Younis said even Pak textile sector has lower share in global trade, however since the recovery phase of the pandemic, Pak export hitting new highs with \$23bn exports in the last three quarters of the current fiscal year.

The host Ms Rameen summing up the conference in the light of recommendations of experts said in essence policy paper on the economy must address the lack of capabilities, innovation and low productivity to achieve economic turnaround.

NBF Book Museum attracts book lovers

ISLAMABAD: The National Book Foundation's (NBF) Book Museum is attracting large numbers of people from across the country, promoting a culture of reading that has been praised by thousands of book lovers.

Talking to APP, a senior official of NBF Faoud Mirza said, "The efforts to promote book reading culture to get the knowledge of the history of the country among youth providing the platform and ease to avail the opportunity." He said as NBF has taken various initiatives to launch a series of innovative projects to promote book reading culture. These initiatives included the formation of Village Book Clubs, City Book Clubs, Children's Book Clubs, Prisoners' Free Minds Book Clubs, Senior Citizens Book Clubs, Travelers' Book Clubs (Books on Wheels), Flying Book Clubs, and Hospital Book Clubs.

NBF has come up with another novel idea to appoint book-loving celebrities of the country as Book Ambassadors to play their role in promoting book-reading habits, he said. - APP

NBF Book Museum attracts book lovers

Theatre Walay arranges dramas for youth

ISLAMABAD: Theatre Walay has arranged a series of dramas for the younger generation providing them a platform to showcase their hidden talent. Talking to APP, Director Theatre Walay Fiza Ali said, "During the period of Covid-19 various events had been ceased but after relaxation, we have arranged several dramas for the emerging artists to portray their skills." She said in our forthcoming artists there is much potential making their future in a way to earn handsome amount. She said our organization making efforts to promote the young generation on a priority basis due to their potential and courage in delivering their skills in a better way.

Theatre Walay arranges dramas for youth

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) and Pakistan Blockchain Institute (PBI) with an aim to foster cooperation between the two organizations to promote ICT related policy and governance, as well as to spread awareness in the country over emerging technologies, especially Blockchain.

The MoU was signed by IPS' GM Operations Naufil Shahruck and Founder/CEO of PBI Ahmad Manzoor, whereas the signing ceremony, which was held at the former's premises, was also attended by Khalid Rahman, chairman IPS, Muhammad Nasrullah, IPS' advisor on ICT, and Rizwan Saleem, a blockchain expert, alongside the IPS' research and management team members.

Need stressed for promoting Pakistan-Italy bilateral trade ties

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry led by Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President called on H.E. Andreas Ferrarese, Ambassador of Italy in his office and discussed with him the prospects for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries. Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President and Sheikh Amir Waheed former President ICCI were in the delegation.

Addressing the delegation, H.E. Andreas Ferrarese, Ambassador of Italy said that his country wanted to further strengthen trade and economic relations with Pakistan to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. He said Pakistan could achieve multiple benefits for its economy by developing close cooperation with Italy. He said that more awareness in the Italian business community about Pakistan would help in enhancing trade relations. He said that Pakistan should focus on value addition of its products and Italy can help it with its advanced technology in various fields including marble and tourism. Speaking at the occasion,



Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Italy was not reflective of their true potential and both countries should focus on developing strong business

linkages between their private sectors to increase bilateral trade volume. He said that technological cooperation of Italy with Pakistan in textiles, construction, marble, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, processed food, dairy, livestock and

other sectors would enable our country to upgrade its industrial capacity and produce value added products for exports promotion. He said that Pakistan has huge reserves of marble & granite and Italian technology would help it to pro-

duce value-added marble products and boost their exports. He said that Pakistan was offering incentives to foreign investors and Italian companies should take advantage of these opportunities by exploring JVs and investment in Pakistan.

Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI and Sheikh Amir Waheed former President ICCI also shared many useful proposals to further improve bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Italy.

Zakaria A. Zia elected President of Islamabad Industrial Association



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leading industrialist Zakaria A. Zia has been elected as the new President of Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA) Mian Waqas Masood as senior vice president and Shahid Cheema as vice president. The services of former presidents of Islamabad Industrial Association Mian Akram Farid, Khalid Javed and Tariq Sadiq for industrial development are unforgettable. Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) of Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA) Islamabad Industrial Association was held in the office of the President Islamabad Industrial Association's manufacturing, automobiles, pharmaceutical, oil, marble and floor sub-trade organizations appreciated the tireless efforts of former President Tariq Sadiq and M. Akram Farid, Former ICCI President Khalid Javed. The association is the sole representative of the in-

dustrialists of neighboring industrial estates including Islamabad Capital Area and Kahuta Industrial Triangle. Worked tirelessly to adapt to the requirements of The Islamabad Industrial Association, under the leadership of the outgoing President Tariq, has played a significant role in highlighting the industrial identity of Islamabad. It is noteworthy that today Islamabad industry is one of the most important industries in Pakistan. Former President Islamabad Industrial Association Mian Akram Farid congratulated the newly elected President, Senior Vice President, Vice President and Executive Committee and appreciated the services of the outgoing leadership. He highlighted the important issues of the industry and apprised them of the efforts being made to address them and the achievements of the Co-Industrial Association and acknowledged the cooperation of CDA and CBR in this regard. He said that security, tax matters,

corporate social responsibility (CSR) and improving the welfare of the people involved in the industry were involved. He added that apart from solving the problems of the industry, To create a soft image of the industry. The association liaised with business entities, chambers of commerce and other industry associations. For the business community, defense organizations had the potential to join hands in local production. The association has also done a lot for the environment. He said that installation of pollution control plants and planting of 50,000 plants in the steel industry is noteworthy. He said that continuity of policies is February to improve the economy of the country. He said that there are more than 1200 large industrial units in Islamabad. These include Steel Marble, Oil & Ghee, Soap & Chemical, Manufacturing, Automobiles, Pharmaceuticals, Oil & Gas, IT & Gas Pipe Manufacturing, Food, Flour

Mills, etc., which contribute significantly to the country's economic growth and are a source of employment for individuals. Former President Islamabad Chamber Khalid Javed administered oath to the newly elected officials and addressing the function said that the achievements so far are due to unity among the industrialists and nothing can be achieved without unity. He apprised the CDA and the concerned departments about the progress of the area and the current progress of the New Industrial Zone project. He said that industrialists from Islamabad and adjoining areas could benefit. Khalid Javed also briefed about the work of Islamabad Industrial Association and stressed on the need to set up a separate and independent office to enhance its usefulness. The newly elected President Zakaria Akbar Zia said that we have a strong desire to develop the Islamabad Industrial Association as an institution.

PAL announces awards for writers' and poets

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Sunday has announced Kamal-e-Fun Award for the year 2020.

Prominent, renowned writer and Poet Mustansar Husain Tarar & Ashoo Lala Faqeer has been nominated for the Kamal-e-Fun Award 2020, said a press release issued here.

The panel of judges consisted on well-known writers and scholars; Kishwar Naheed, Dr. Anwar Ahmad, Dr. Rauf Parekh, Mahmood Sham, Asghar Nadeem Syed, Parveen Malik, Muhammad Izhar ul Haq, Dr. Riaz Majeed, Hafeez Khan, Muhammad Hameed Shahid, Dr. Abaseen Yousufzai, Nasir Ali Syed, Dr. Abdul Razaq Sabir, Dr. Zulfiqar Sial, Taj Joyo, Dr. Zia ul Hasan, Dr. Rubina Shaheen, Dr. Qasim Naseem, Haris Khaliq and Dr. Wahid

Bux Buzdarmet Kishwar Naheed presided over the meeting.

Kamal-e-Fun Award is the highest literary award in the field of literature for recognition of lifetime's achievement in creative and research work. The amount of this award is Rs. 1,000,000/-

Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman, PAL has also announced the National Literary Awards for the year 2020, given on the best literary books written during the year 2020 in Urdu and other Pakistani languages in a Press Conference.

According to the decision of the panel, for Urdu Prose (Creative Literature) Saadat Hasan Manto Award is given to Neelofar Iqbal on her Book "Siah Sona" and to Shaheen Abbasson his Book "Paare Shumare", for Urdu Prose (Criticism & Research) Baba-i-Urdu Molvi Abdul Haq Award is given to Dr. Bibi Aameena on her book "Urdu Lughat."

DOAM committed to preserve, restore Gandhara heritage

ISLAMABAD: The Directorate of Archeology and Museums (DOAM) and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government are committed to restoring and preserving the rich heritage of the Gandhara civilization's famous art and Buddhist cultural specimens to transform the province's tourist center.

Talking to APP, an official of DOAM Raza Mehmood said, "Peshawar Museum is notable for its collection of Buddhist artwork dating from the ancient Gandhara region." He said the Museum initially had only one exhibition hall and now it was further expanded with the construc-

tion of a new block with two galleries, two halls for the museum's collection in storage, offices for the provincial directorate of archaeology.

The historic exhibition hall was also renovated at that time. He said Peshawar Museum has one of the largest and most extensive collections of Gandhara art of the Buddhist period and is considered to be one of the biggest collections of Buddhist objects in the world.

He further informed that the museum also contains the largest collection of Gautama Buddha, Buddhist stone sculptures, terracotta figurines, and other Buddhist objects. - APP

SC's registrar rejects petition

ISLAMABAD: Raising objections to the petition, seeking a probe into the 'threatening letter' received by Prime Minister Imran Khan, the Registrar Office of the Supreme Court (SC) on Saturday rejected it, saying it was non-maintainable.

The registrar said the petition did not pertain to basic human rights, and that it could not be heard under article 184/3 of the constitution. Raising another objection, the registrar said that the petitioner had not approached the relevant forum. The petition filed by Naeemul Hassan Advocate read that since according to the letter, which the prime minister had shown to a large public gathering in Islamabad on March 27, there was a 'foreign hand' behind the opposition's no-trust motion, therefore the Supreme Court put on hold voting on the motion until and unless probe into the 'foreign connection' was not completed. The petitioner also demanded the formation of a commission similar to the one formed to investigate the Memogate Scandal. And since it was a sensitive issue and of extreme importance, the petition should be fixed for the hearing today, the petitioner prayed. DNA

Lok Virsa promoting women entrepreneurs

ISLAMABAD: Lok Virsa was making efforts to promote women Entrepreneurs Skillfull work aiming to provide platform to showcase their artistic skills.

Talking to APP, a senior official of Lok Virsa Inayat Ullah said a number of programs has been launched for promoting women Entrepreneurs embroidery works, crafting, sewing and various other skills.

He said several women came from Sindh province showcasing the traditional artwork to attract people including foreign tourists as there were many stalls set up under the premises of Lok Virsa. He further informed that Lok Virsa among pioneers to provide individual platform specially for women artists to work independently.

He said in recent years, the study of women entrepreneurship has experienced great growth, gaining a broad consensus among academics and contributing above all to understanding all those factors that explain the difficulty of women in undertaking an entrepreneurial career. - APP

Youth demand to restart sculpture classes

ISLAMABAD: The emerging youth Wednesday demanded to restart sculpture classes at Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) to get and avail the opportunity under the supervision of senior artists.

Talking to APP, an official of PNCA Masroor Shah said PNCA would again restart sculpture classes to provide platform to those interested in such technique art.

Sculpture, an artistic form in which hard or plastic materials are worked into three-dimensional art objects.

The designs may be embodied in freestanding objects, in reliefs on surfaces, or in environments ranging from tableaux to contexts that envelop the spectator would be taught.

IPS, PBI to raise awareness for Blockchain

KHAYAM ABBASI

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The political crisis

A NEW, unprecedented saga debuted in the ongoing political crisis Sunday. Deputy Speaker of National Assembly Qasim Suri rejected the Vote of No Confidence Motion moved by the joint opposition against Prime Minister Imran Khan, citing Article 5 of the Constitution of Pakistan, under which loyalty to the State was the basic duty of every citizen. Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Suri in a ruling said the no-confidence motion should be in line with the Constitution, laws and rules. "No foreign power has the right to topple an elected government under any conspiracy. So I give the ruling that no-confidence resolution is against the national integrity and sovereignty and I give the ruling to disallow the no-confidence resolution as per rules and law." Earlier, Minister for Law Ch. Fawad Hussain asked the chair to determine the admissibility of the no-confidence resolution as a foreign conspiracy has been hatched against the elected government. He said that Article 5 (1) was about the loyalty to State and obedience to the Constitution and under which loyalty to the State was the basic duty of every citizen. Later in the day, President Dr Arif Alvi approved the advice of Prime Minister Imran Khan to dissolve the National Assembly. The president accorded his approval to the prime minister's advice 'under Article 58 (1) read with Article 48(1) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan', President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. Earlier, in a televised address to the nation, the prime minister announced that he had sent an advice to the president to dissolve the assembly, paving way for holding of fresh election in the country. Prime Minister Imran Khan reiterated that a foreign interference had been made into the internal politics of Pakistan as a plan for a no-confidence motion was orchestrated outside. Addressing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders, he said that in the National Security Committee's meeting, the country's highest security body, it was also noted that a foreign interference was made into the internal politics of the country through a no-confidence motion. He said minutes of the communique regarding a meeting between the ambassador of Pakistan in the US and the US officials were shared in the NSC's meeting. The eyes of the nation now lie on Supreme Court, where the case will be heard Monday. Whatever the outcome maybe, the ways which could lead towards anarchy and unrest must be avoided at all costs.

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Britain's refugee policy

MORE than four million refugees have fled Ukraine since Russia began its barbaric military campaign against the Ukrainian people just over a month ago. It has been described by the UN's refugee agency as the fastest-growing refugee crisis since the Second World War. Poland is host to almost 2.5 million refugees, Romania just over 600,000, Moldova almost 400,000 and the whole of the EU has opened its borders to Ukrainian refugees, with no visa required. In contrast, the UK has issued fewer than 5,000 visas under the "Homes for Ukraine" scheme, not even a sixth of the number of applications. There are aspects of the government's response to the crisis that are to be commended, but on the worsening refugee situation it has been astonishingly mean-spirited. In the early weeks, the only refugee resettlement route was for Ukrainians with family settled in the UK; at first, this only applied to immediate dependents, but now includes extended family. People using this process have reported significant delays, with family members having to finance extended hotel stays in countries bordering Ukraine while they wait for the Home Office bureaucracy to process visa applications. Eventually, the government bowed to public pressure to do more. Three weeks ago, it launched Homes for Ukraine, a scheme that allows Ukrainians to come to the UK if they are matched with a host to act as an individual sponsor for their visa and who can provide them with accommodation for at least six months (the host will be paid £350 a month by the government to do so). Under this scheme, refugees will get a three-year visa and be entitled to work and use public services in the UK. Making cruel, inhumane and inflexible bureaucracy an integral aspect of government policy in order to try to drive down immigration and asylum numbers has had dreadful consequences. It has led to people who are British by any meaningful measure being denied basic rights and young people who have spent the majority of their childhood in Britain finding on turning 18 that they are not eligible for the same educational support as their peers. It has rendered the state incapable of fulfilling its ethical obligations to people fleeing conflict and torture in countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine. Incremental reform will not do: the UK's immigration and asylum system needs to be dismantled and rebuilt from scratch.

The 2022 World Cup: Is Qatar putting its best foot forward?

James Dorsey

Ms. Klavness' stirring speech drew a fiery response from Supreme Committee secretary-general Hassan Al-Thawadi. "We're not seeking validation. Legacy is being delivered as we speak. We've showcased to the world what tournament hosting can do," Mr. Al-Thawadi said

THIS is Qatar's year to put its best foot forward. A major producer of natural gas, the tiny Gulf state is under the magnifying glass as it enters the final phase of hosting the 2022 World Cup later this year and emerges as a potential part of efforts to reduce European dependence on Russian energy. On balance, Qatar looks like it has already succeeded, as much on its own steam as with the help of its erstwhile detractors in the Gulf and elsewhere in the Arab world, including the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia. Over the past decade, much of the attention has focused on labour rights in the Gulf state as a result of world governing soccer body FIFA's awarding of the 2022 World Cup hosting rights to Qatar in 2010. Qatar remains a target of criticism by human

rights groups, despite implementing far-reaching reforms of its kafala or labour sponsorship system that long put workers at the mercy of their employers. The criticism is rooted in the Gulf state's weak implementation of the reforms; a problematic judicial system; a top-down, centralised decision-making process; and poor handling of World Cup and sports-related incidents. In the latest incident, The Guardian newspaper, a pillar of critical coverage of the Qatari World Cup, reported that migrant workers, a majority of the population, had collectively paid billions of dollars in illegal recruitment fees over the last decade. Qatar outlawed burdening migrant workers with recruitment fees as part of its reforms. Qatar opened recruitment centres in eight labour-supplying countries to ensure that recruitment would meet ethical standards in line with recommendations made by a Qatar Foundation study. The centres have reduced the risk of employment terms in workers' contracts being unilaterally changed but have been unable to curb the levelling of recruitment fees. To compensate for their inability, the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, the Qatari organizer of the World Cup, has obliged companies it contracts to repay the fees without workers having to provide proof of payment. Companies have so far pledged to repay roughly USD\$28.5 million to some 49,000 workers, \$22 million of which have already been paid out. It is a step the government could apply nationally with relative ease in an effort to demonstrate sincerity and, more fundamentally, counter the criticism. Similarly, in response to complaints raised by human rights groups and others, the government could also offer to compensate families of workers who die on construction sites. None of these measures would put a dent in Qatari budgets but would earn the Gulf state immeasurable goodwill. "The migrant workers injured or families of those who died in the build-up to the World Cup should be cared for," said Lise Klavness, the newly-elected presi-

dent of the Norwegian Football Federation, at this week's FIFA Congress in Doha. Ms. Klavness' stirring speech drew a fiery response from Supreme Committee secretary-general Hassan Al-Thawadi. "We're not seeking validation. Legacy is being delivered as we speak. We've showcased to the world what tournament hosting can do," Mr. Al-Thawadi said. Nevertheless, Qatar hasn't done itself any favours with its handling of the case of Abdullah Ibhais, a Jordanian-Palestinian Supreme Committee communications executive, who opposed putting a spin on a strike by migrant workers, including some assigned to World Cup-related projects. The workers were on strike because their salaries had not been paid. Mr. Ibhais was subsequently accused of leaking state secrets and awarding a social media tender to a Turkish bidder in return for Turkish citizenship. He asserts that he was forced to sign a confession and was initially refused access to a lawyer. Mr. Ibhais was sentenced to five years in prison based on evidence that, according to Human Rights Watch, was "vague, circumstantial, and in some cases contradictory." However, an appeals court subsequently reduced his sentence to three years in jail. In a statement, the Supreme Committee insisted that the allegations against Mr. Ibhais had "merit. The committee contended that the assertion that the charges constitute retribution for "raising matters pertaining to workers' welfare is absolutely false." In contrast to recurring rights issues that cast a shadow over the Qatari World Cup, Qatar garnered substantial goodwill during the 3.5-year-long United Arab Emirates-Saudi-led diplomatic and economic boycott designed to force the Gulf state to subjugate itself to the will of its detractors. Perceived as the underdog confronted with demands that would have de facto deprived it of its independence, Qatar was lauded for its resilience and steadfastness that ultimately persuaded the UAE and Saudi Arabia to end the boycott in January 2021.

India's recent election results a matter of concern

Arif Rafiq

The elections in Uttar Pradesh – a state so huge that it would be the world's fifth-most populous country were it independent – are a leap...

UTTAR Pradesh chief Yogi Adityanath is a radical Hindu cleric who could one day lead the world's second-most populous country with an iron fist. Nearly 90 million voters took part in the elections that came to a close this month in India's Uttar Pradesh state, making them the world's largest subnational elections. But as grand a democratic exercise as they were, their results are as deeply ominous. The elections in Uttar Pradesh – a state so huge that it would be the world's fifth-most populous country were it independent – are a leap forward in India's march toward becoming an authoritarian, Hindu majoritarian state. The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which also rules at the centre and in 17 states, won its second consecutive Uttar Pradesh state elections, breaking a cycle of anti-incumbency that goes back decades. The BJP's victory is a vote of confidence not just in the party, but also in Yogi Adityanath, a Hindu militant monk who has served as the state's chief minister for the past five years. These elections enable Adityanath to stay on as chief minister and bolster his national star power. Many observers now view him as the most likely successor to Prime Minister Narendra Modi later this decade. Under Modi, democracy, civil liberties, and secularism have all backslid, and this has been no surprise. Modi, after all, oversaw deadly anti-Muslim pogroms as chief minister of the state of Gujarat in 2002. Many voted for Modi precisely because they saw him as a muscular Hindu nationalist leader intent on dismantling the country's secular system. But as bad as Modi has been for Indian secularism and the rights of Christian and Muslim minorities, Adityanath is expected to be far worse; he represents an even more pernicious brand of the Hindu nationalist ideology in India known as Hindutva. Before coming into office, Adityanath founded a violent, anti-Muslim vigilante group, the Hindu Yuva Vahini. Militants from the group have been involved in numerous incidents targeting Muslims, including arson, attempted rape, murder, and rioting. Adityanath was once jailed for

inciting anti-Muslim riots. He also called for a "religious war" and the abduction of Muslim women to avenge Hindu men marrying Muslim men. As chief minister, he has promoted a conspiracy theory that falsely claims that Muslim men woo Hindu women in order to trick them into converting to Islam. Adityanath is also keen on erasing the Muslim cultural influence on India. He's renamed numerous Indian cities that have had Muslim or Islamic names, giving them ones associated with the Hindu tradition. Adityanath has even claimed that the iconic Taj Mahal – the Islamic mausoleum that is India's single-largest tourist attraction – "does not reflect Indian culture." A man like Adityanath leading India in the future puts the country's nuclear weapons at risk, especially at a time when New Delhi is loosening its nuclear doctrine and coming closer to abandoning its "no-first-use" nuke policy. Now, even if Adityanath's national ascent ultimately stalls, the future of India's Muslims is grim. In Uttar Pradesh, the BJP has retweeted its political strategy, preserving its anti-Muslim rhetoric and Hindu nationalism while incorporating generous cash handouts to compensate for its poor handling of the economy and the Covid-19 pandemic. Radical Hindu nationalism is now mainstream in India. The country could soon pass the point of no return if it has not already. It remains to be seen whether America and other Western countries will change course and take a stand on democracy and human rights in India before it is too late. Successive US administrations have been averse to holding India accountable for violations of religious freedom, even in symbolic ways. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom has already recommended that India be put on a list of "countries of particular concern" for religious freedom, but the State Department opted not to do so, despite the grave threats to Christians and Muslims from state-linked actors. Today, Washington is facing the critical challenge of taking India, its supposed ally, to task – be it through the designation of India as a violator of religious freedoms or the sanctioning of Indian officials and ruling party members who have orchestrated religious violence, including the anti-Muslim pogroms that took place during President Donald Trump's 2020 visit. Or, it can sit back and witness the world's second-most populous country transition into a majoritarian autocracy. The Biden administration claims that human rights are a cornerstone of its foreign policy. But these claims will be proven hollow if it continues to look away from India's descent – not only are religious minorities at risk, but so too is America's credibility as a defender of democracy and freedom.

– Courtesy: TRT World

Israel can't complain about violence when it provokes it

Ray Hanania



US President Joe Biden offered his condolences to the families of Hamarsheh's victims, and said there was a "terrorist threat," but said nothing about the Israeli murders of the Palestinians

VIOLENCE is not the answer to the endless conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, and the loss of life is always regrettable and tragic regardless of the ethnicity or nationality of the victims. But until there is a genuine effort by Israel's government to embrace peace based on compromise, and to recognize

the rights of Palestinians as Palestinians have recognized the rights of Israelis, no one should be surprised that violence there continues. Violence happens in every country and every city in the world. You can reduce violence but it is a fact that you can never stop it. Chicago, for example, had nearly 800 homicides in 2021, or more than 2 killings per day. And yet, unlike in Israel and Palestine where violence is fueled by religion and national identity, Chicago is not under a military occupation that discriminates against people based on religion and national origin. Diaa Hamarsheh, 27, a Palestinian from the village of Yabad in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, was shot and killed by Israeli security forces last week after he shot and killed five Israelis. Israel immediately arrested Hamarsheh's relatives and will probably destroy his family's home and property, a practice that is just as criminal as anything Hamarsheh may have done. The next day, Israeli soldiers attacked a Palestinian refugee camp near Jenin in the West Bank, and killed two Palestinians and wounded 14 others for protesting against the raids. US President Joe Biden offered his condolences to the families of Hamarsheh's victims, and said there was a "terrorist threat," but said nothing about the Israeli murders of the Palestinians. What's the difference between Hamarsheh killing Israelis and the Israelis killing Palestinians? Why is there violence? Israel refuses to engage in negotiations to create a Palestinian state. Instead, it wants to continue to control the land it occupied in 1967, and is weighing plans to annex most of the West Bank to be a part of Israel. Of course, when Israel says it will annex the West Bank they are talking only about annexing the land, while continuing to exclude Palestinian civilians. Israel will take the land but continue to imprison Christians and Muslims in a racist

apartheid system, and deny them citizens' rights. In an atmosphere of state violence against millions of oppressed civilians who are denied equal rights, would you not expect some of the oppressed to get angry, push back, and turn to violence? Violence isn't just coming from Christian and Muslim Arabs and Palestinians. It's coming from Jews and Israelis too. But when an Israeli kills a Palestinian, the Israeli government slaps the offender's wrist with a mild punishment, or often no punishment at all. They don't arrest the family members of Israeli terrorists. They don't destroy the homes of Israeli terrorists. Even when Palestinians renounce violence, Israel's government turns to violence in order to provoke more violence, as they did when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin agreed to recognize Palestinian statehood and entered into negotiations to reach a two-state solution. Before the process got to the point of implementing a genuine peace, Yigal Amir, a 25-year-old Jewish settler fanatic inspired by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's extremist anti-peace rhetoric, murdered Rabin to stop the peace process. In killing Rabin, Amir and the extremist politicians whom inspired him killed the peace movement and fueled more violence, which Israel's extremists use as the pretext to deny peace or two states. Violence allows many Israelis to justify in their own minds the continued theft of Palestinian lands, the continued denial of non-Jewish rights, and more importantly, to portray themselves as the "victims" and not the oppressors that they are. If Israelis want to avoid more violence, they need to end their violence first. Israel is the established recognized government in this conflict. The Palestinians are an occupied and oppressed people.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Morocco's bees face disaster

INZERKI (Morocco): Morocco's village of Inzerki is proud to claim it has the world's oldest and largest collective beehive, but instead of buzzing with springtime activity, the colonies have collapsed amid crippling drought. Beekeeper Brahim Chatoui says he has lost almost a third of his hives in just two months – and he is not alone. "At this time of year, this area would normally be buzzing with bees," said Chatoui, sweating under a blazing springtime sun. "Today, they're dying at a terrifying rate."

The North African kingdom has seen a dramatic spike in mass die-offs of the critical pollinators, a phenomenon called "colony collapse disorder".

Worldwide, experts say such sudden mass deaths of bees are often linked to the destruction of nature and the rampant use of pesticides. But authorities in Morocco say these collapses are caused by the worst drought to hit the country in 40 years, which has decimated the plants on which bees rely for food.

The crisis is so acute that the government released 130 million dirhams (\$13 million), to support beekeepers and investigate the cause of the bee deaths. Morocco's National Food Safety Office, which carried out the investigation, ruled out disease as a reason. – APP

Pakistani peacekeepers are 'valiant heroes'

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 03 (APP): Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations (UN), Munir Akram, has paid high tributes to the six 'valiant' Pakistani peacekeepers who made the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as their bodies were repatriated from Goma, the capital of North Kivu province, on Saturday. "I salute the commitment of our brave sons - the fallen peacekeepers from Pakistan in D R Congo," he wrote on the Twitter.

"They made the supreme sacrifice in the service of peace and to support the Congolese people. They are Pakistan's valiant heroes and will stay forever in the nation's thoughts and prayers," Ambassador Akram added. – APP

'One dead in Baku nightclub blast'

BAKU: One person was killed and 37 others injured in an explosion at a nightclub in Azerbaijan's capital early Sunday, the prosecutor general said. "One person, a 43-year-old employee was killed," the prosecutor general was quoted as saying by the Russian news agency RIA Novosti. "Thirty-seven others were injured, of whom four are in a serious condition," the statement said. RIA Novosti quoted medical sources as saying that an Italian and a Senegalese citizen were among the casualties. The blast, which occurred at 3:00 am (2300 GMT), was caused by a leak from a tank of liquefied gas stored in the nightclub, according to the national gas utility, Azerigas. – APP

Sri Lanka protesters defy curfew after social media blackout

COLOMBO: Armed troops in Sri Lanka blocked a Sunday opposition protest march staged in defiance of an emergency curfew to protest the island nation's worsening economic crisis, after authorities imposed a social media blackout to contain public dissent. The South Asian island nation is facing severe shortages of food, fuel and other essentials, along with sharp price rises and crippling power

cuts, in its most painful downturn since independence from Britain in 1948. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa imposed a state of emergency on Friday, the day after a crowd attempted to storm his home in the capital Colombo, and a nationwide curfew is in effect until Monday morning. The Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), Sri Lanka's main opposition alliance, denounced a social media blockade

imposed Sunday to quell intensifying public demonstrations, and said it was time for the government to tender its resignation. Armed troops moved to stop a protest by more than one hundred opposition lawmakers and supporters attempting to march to the capital's Independence Square from the home of opposition leader Sajith Premadasa. "President Rajapaksa bet-

ter realise that the tide has already turned on his autocratic rule," SJB lawmaker Harsha de Silva told AFP. Fellow SJB legislator Eran Wickramaratne said the spiralling situation raised the prospects of martial law. "We can't allow a military takeover," he said. "They should know we are still a democracy." Anonymous activists had called for mass protests Sunday on social media before

the ban order went into effect. There was a heavy presence of troops elsewhere in the capital as the curfew was strictly enforced. News photographers were denied access to Independence Square, a popular venue for demonstrations in Colombo. Overnight, however, hundreds defied the curfew and staged small demonstrations in various Colombo neighbourhoods and dis-

persed peacefully, police and residents said. Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp were among the platforms shut down Sunday on the orders of defence authorities, internet service providers told their subscribers. Private media outlets reported that the chief of Sri Lanka's internet regulator resigned after the order went into effect. – APP

Russia says it hits oil refinery

MOSCOW: The Russian armed forces hit an oil refinery and fuel depots near the port city of Odessa in southern Ukraine, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Sunday. "This morning, an oil refinery and three fuel and lubricants depots providing fuel to the Ukrainian army in the Nikolaev direction were destroyed near Odessa with high-precision sea and air-launched missiles," Igor Konashenkov, a Defense Ministry spokesman, told journalists. Since the beginning of the "special military operation" in Ukraine, Konashenkov claimed, Russia's aerospace forces have destroyed 125 warplanes, 88 helicopters, 383 drones of Ukrainian forces, 221 surface-to-air missile systems, 1,903 tanks and other armored combat vehicles, 207 multiple-launch rocket systems, 805 field artillery armaments and mortars, as well as 1,781 units of special military automotive equipment.

The Russian war against Ukraine, which started Feb. 24, has been met with international outrage, with the EU, US, and Britain, among others, implementing tough financial sanctions on Moscow. – APP

Serb President voices hope for victory

Foreign Desk BELGRADE: Voicing hope for victory in elections, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Sunday that people will choose a good future for themselves.

After casting his vote in the capital Belgrade for presidential, parliamentary and local elections, Vucic said: "I am confident that people will choose a good future for themselves, their families, and their children. I believe that citizens will choose continued economic progress. As far as I have heard, there has been no problem so far. I personally have a meaningful and important expectation of victory. I think everyone will get what they deserve." Meanwhile, the presidential candidate of the opposition "United for the Victory of Serbia", Zdravko Ponos, said he expected the elections would mark the beginning of more normal relations in society and the end of artificial divisions, better relations with the environment, a more certain future and more stable life. Ponos said that Serbia is a "deeply divided society." – APP

India, Australia sign trade pact

NEW DELHI: India and Australia on Saturday signed a trade agreement that removed tariffs on 96% of Indian exports, a government statement said.

The India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA) was signed in a virtual ceremony by Indian Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal and Australian Trade Minister Dan Tehan, said an Australian.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison also witnessed the virtual ceremony. "Signing of IndAus ECTA in such a short span of time reflects the depth of the mutual confidence between the two countries," Modi said, following the signing of the agreement. – APP

China reports 13,000 cases

SHANGHAI: China reported 13,000 Covid cases on Sunday, the most since the peak of the first pandemic wave over two years ago, as health officials said they have found a suspected new subtype of the Omicron variant in the Shanghai area. China's "zero-Covid" strategy is under extreme pressure as the virus whips across the country. Until March, China had successfully kept the daily caseload down to double or triple digits, with hard, localised lockdowns, mass testing and travel restrictions.

But cases have surged over recent weeks to thousands each day, especially in the outbreak epicentre of Shanghai, where streets were eerily empty on Sunday as 25 million people stayed in under lockdown orders. Officials in Suzhou, a city 30 minutes west of Shanghai, have detected a mutation of the Omicron variant not found in local or international databases, state media reported on Sunday. "This means a new variant of Omicron has been discovered locally," Xinhua said, citing health official Zhang Jun, deputy director of the Suzhou Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

Lithuania completely ends Russian gas imports

VILNIUS: The president of Lithuania announced that the Baltic state has completely ended gas imports from Russia amid Moscow's war on Ukraine. "From this month on – no more Russian gas in Lithuania," President Gitanas Nausėda wrote on Twitter. "Years ago my country made decisions that today allow us with no pain to break energy ties with the aggressor. If we can do it, the rest of Europe can do it too!" he added. Energy Minister Dainius Kreivys supported the president's announcement. "The energy independence strategy launched in 2009 has reached one of its final stages today – not a single molecule of Russian gas will enter the (Lithuanian) gas system," Kreivys wrote on Twitter. "(Lithuanian) gas needs will be fully met by the Klaipėda LNG terminal. Lithuania will not buy any gas from an aggressor state." The Energy Ministry said: "Seeking full energy independence from Russian gas, in response to Russia's energy blackmail in Europe and the war in Ukraine, Lithuania has completely abandoned

The current outbreak is also testing the patience of the Chinese towards tough restrictions, at a time when much of the world has reopened.

On Sunday, the 1.5 million residents of Baicheng in northeast China joined the ranks of tens of millions of other Chinese who have endured some form of lockdown over the last month, disrupting work and damaging the economy. China recorded 13,146 cases on Sunday, the National Health Commission said in a statement, with "no new deaths" reported.

It is the country's highest daily infection tally since mid-February 2020. Nearly 70 percent of the national caseload was found in Shanghai, the commission said, after mass testing the metropolis' 25 million residents. City authorities have conceded they are struggling to contain the outbreak, with thousands now in state quarantine and reports circulating of health workers being stretched. Vice Premier Sun Chunlan urged "resolute and swift moves" to snuff out the outbreak after a visit to Shanghai, Xinhua reported Sunday. – APP

Metro-driver receives prize of outstanding CPEC staff member

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Orange Line Metro-driver Muhammad Shah Zareen Khan who received prize as an outstanding CPEC staff member says he is proud of his work, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday.

The year 2016 was the darkest period for him. The aggravating illness of his mother and mounting medical expenses put him under considerable pressure. "I had lost my father, and I couldn't imagine what life would be like without my mother", Muhammad recalled when talking to Gwadar Pro. In dire need of a well-paid job, Muhammad Shah Zareen Khan, hailing from Sharaq pur, a small city of Punjab, joined the Orange Line Metro Train project which was launched in September 2015.

His main job was to drive the Chinese officials to and from the meeting venues and the airports.

Focus, control, and speed, Muhammad Shah Zareen Khan shuttles in the Lahore city, with views outside the window flashing by. He is no stranger to the fleeting scenery. As a veteran driver and a travelling enthusiast, he had driven around the northern area of the province numerous



times. From twisting mountain roads to deep valleys, he feasted his eyes on the splendid scenery in nature. When asked about the most difficult part of driving, he said, "to make the right at every crossroad". "My interest in driving was developed in college, when I drove the school van for three to four years. That was the point I learned to manage difficulties in life

responsibly because I had to pick or drop children from school or home at any cost", Muhammad told Gwadar Pro. Having learned how to drive 25 years ago, Muhammad didn't go into this profession right after graduation. In an agriculture-based country, Muhammad tried different professions, from farmer, to pesticide seller, to shop keeper.

"For me, it is an inspiring experience to get exposed to various landscape and people through working and travelling. It also helps with my driving, because to be a driver is not all about manipulating a car. It's also about getting in touch with different people from different backgrounds and feeling the impulses of the city", Muhammad said.

Macron calls for 'mobilisation' at first rally as French polls tighten

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron called on tens of thousands of cheering but increasingly nervous supporters to help him win a second term as he held his first election campaign rally on Saturday just a week from the start of voting.

According to polls, far-right rival Marine Le Pen is gathering momentum and threatening what once seemed an almost unassailable position of strength for Macron, a pro-business centrist elected in 2017.

"The mobilisation is now, the battle is now!" was how Macron concluded a two-and-a-half hour speech at a stadium west of the capital. "I don't want either arrogance or defeatism, I want a general mobilisation. He cast the election as a fight between his camp in the political mainstream and



far-right "extremists", calling it "a battle between progress and turning back, a battle between patriotism and Europe, and nationalism." In keeping with claims that the rally would be modelled on sports events, the 44-year-old entered the room to pumping music and fireworks before taking to a stage set up like a boxing ring in the middle of the floor. For most of his speech, he dwelt on what he saw as his

biggest achievements in office – lower unemployment and taxes, higher spending for security – and his plans for a second five-year term. But the conclusion saw him turn his fire on anti-immigration Le Pen and far-right former TV pundit Eric Zemmour – without ever naming them. "The danger of extremism has reached new heights because in recent months and years, hatred, alternative truths have been normal-

ised. We've got used to it," he warned.

Two new polls published Saturday suggested Macron and Le Pen would finish top in the first round of voting on April 10, with Macron triumphing in the run-off on April 24 by 53-47 percent.

"Look at what happened with Brexit, and so many other elections: what looked improbable actually happened," Macron warned, referring to Britain's shock decision to leave the EU in 2016 that most pollsters failed to foresee.

"I tell you here tonight with a lot of certainty: nothing is impossible," he added. Among those in the crowd, a mix of all ages mostly drawn from France's professional and educated classes, most expressed confidence that Macron would prevail despite the final-week dynamic in favour of Le Pen. – APP

Azerbaijan ready for peace process: Jeyhun Bayramov

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijan is ready to meet halfway if Armenia is seriously involved in the peace process, Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov has said.

He made the remarks at a joint press conference with Italy's Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Minister Luigi Di Maio in Baku.

"In recent days, we have been hearing positive messages from Armenia in this direction. I hope this is indeed a display of a serious approach. Azerbaijan has openly expressed its position. If Armenia is really serious about this process, then Azerbaijan is ready to meet halfway and take concrete steps," he added.

The minister stressed that Italy will provide additional support to Azerbaijan in de-mining liberated territories.

"During the meeting, we addressed the issues of mine safety and the mine-clearing process. My Italian colleague noted that their companies would take additional steps in this regard. They will help relevant Azerbaijani agencies in de-mining," Bayramov said.

The Azerbaijani minister informed his counterpart about the need to create a working group on the delimitation and demarcation of the border between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the proposals made to Armenia for a peace agreement, and the main basic principles of this agreement, pre-

sented by Azerbaijan in February. Bayramov briefed Luigi Di Maio about Azerbaijan's proposals to Armenia to open communications in the region.

He underlined that Italy has been the first partner country of Azerbaijan to take part in the restoration of the territories liberated from Armenian occupation in the 2020 second Karabakh war.

The minister made the remarks at the "Azerbaijan - Italy: Path to multifaceted strategic partnership" conference at ADA University. The minister stressed that Azerbaijan hopes for Italy's participation in the development of joint projects on renewable energy sources. "Azerbaijan is paying great



attention to the development of renewable energy sources. We hope that Italian companies will take part in the development of joint projects in this area," Bayramov said.

Speaking about bilateral economic ties, the minister noted the importance of the energy sector. "There is high-level cooperation between the two countries in the oil and gas sector. The commissioning of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) allowed us to supply Azerbaijani gas to Italy," Bayramov stated.

Azerbaijan is currently one of the key partners of Italy, Luigi Di Maio said at the joint press conference. According to Di Maio, it's necessary to diversify energy resources, and Italy has

plans for energy security. In his remarks at the "Azerbaijan - Italy: Path to multifaceted strategic partnership" conference at the ADA University, the Italian minister described Azerbaijan as his country's important energy partner.

According to him, gas cooperation has become a very important part of relations between Azerbaijan and Italy.

He emphasized that Azerbaijan and Italy cooperate at a high level not only in the energy sector but also in other sectors of the economy. According to him, relations between the countries are developing in various fields, both in education and humanitarian and trade spheres. The minister added that

Azerbaijan and Italy have also strengthened their partnership in the energy sector thanks to the launch of the TAP project.

"Azerbaijan and Italy have traditionally friendly relations. These friendly relations are built on a very solid foundation," Bayramov earlier told the joint press conference after his meeting with the Italian counterpart.

He said that Azerbaijani-Italian relations have successfully developed over the past 30 years and reached the level of strategic cooperation and partnership. "High-level visits between the two countries have played an important role in developing ties between the two countries," the minister added.

Briefs

Taliban orders 'strict' ban on opium poppy cultivation

DNA

KABUL: The Taliban has issued a decree banning the cultivation of opium poppy, as the group tries to assuage international concerns regarding drug control in the impoverished South Asian country. "As per the decree of the supreme leader of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, all Afghans are informed that from now on, cultivation of poppy has been strictly prohibited across the country," the group's supreme leader Haibatullah Akhundzada said on Sunday. "If anyone violates the decree, the crop will be destroyed immediately and the violator will be treated according to the Sharia law," he added at a news conference in the capital, Kabul. The order said the production, use or transport of other narcotics was also banned. Drug control has been one major demand of the international community to the Taliban, which took over the country in August and is seeking formal international recognition in order to wind back sanctions that are severely hampering banking, business and development. The group banned poppy growing towards the end of their last rule in 2000 as they sought international legitimacy, but faced a popular backlash and later mostly changed its stance, according to experts. Following the decree, Afghanistan's acting Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi urged the international community to cooperate with the country in the treatment of drug addicts and to help farmers diversify their business, local agency TOLONews reported. Poppy cultivation is a key revenue source for many impoverished farmers in the country which has seen relative peace since the US-led foreign forces withdrew after 20 years of war and occupation.

US wants Pak to play its role in Afghanistan

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Despite growing tensions in bilateral ties, the United States still wants Pakistan to continue playing its role in bringing peace and stability to Afghanistan. On March 31, both Pakistan and the United States participated in yet another meeting of the so-called Extended Troika for Afghanistan, which also includes Russia and China. All four countries sent their special envoys for Afghanistan to the ancient Chinese city of Tuxi which also hosted the foreign ministers of China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for another meeting. After the troika meeting, a spokesperson for the Chinese Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Wang Wenbin, noted that "China, the US, Russia and Pakistan are all countries with significant influence on the Afghan issue," a key point that also echoed at a US State Department's latest news briefing. "These are countries that have a good degree of leverage with the Taliban, and the 'Extended Troika' has, in the past, been a constructive forum, and it is critical that the international community remain united in its approach to Afghanistan," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said. "It is especially critical with countries that have a good deal of leverage with the Taliban. The United States would be included in that, Russia would be included in that, the People's Republic of China would be included in that, and Pakistan would be included in that." The US official said that it was "incumbent on all of these countries to use that leverage to push the Taliban in the right direction." Mr Price said that US interests in Afghanistan "are aligned with the members of the troika," that includes Pakistan, which has the longest border with Afghanistan and policy makers in Washington believe that Islamabad still has enough leverage on the Taliban to influence their policymaking.



ISLAMABAD: CEO Serena Hotels South and East Asia Aziz Boolani hosted dinner for the outgoing Ambassador of Somalia Khadija Al Makhzoumi. Seen in the picture are from left to right sitting, Ambassadors of Morocco, Turkey, wife of Turkish ambassador, Representative TRNC, wife of Jordan Ambassador, Khadija Al Makhzoumi Ambassador of Somalia, Mrs. Aziz Boolani, wife of Palestine ambassador, daughter of Morocco Ambassador and husband of TRNC Representative. Standing from left to right; Editor Islamabad POST/CENTRELINE, Ansar M Bhatti, Ambassador of Nigeria, host Aziz Boolani, Ambassadors of Jordan, Iraq, DHM Somalia, Ambassadors of Palestine and South Africa. – DNA

Sacked governor Sarwar blasts PTI leadership

DNA

LAHORE: Former governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar lambasted the PTI leadership Sunday after he was removed from office, with sources saying the decision was taken at PML-Q leader Chaudhry Parvez Elahi's request. The ex-governor, addressing a press conference shortly after being sacked, said if there is an foreign conspiracy against the incumbent government then it was electing Buzdar as the chief minister. Sarwar said that despite having several prominent candidates, including Fawad Chaudhry, Imran Khan decided to pick Usman Buzdar as the chief minister – as only he could move Punjab towards the goal of "Naya Pakistan". "All of PTI workers – in Punjab, Pakistan – and the federal ministers complained to us whether this was the Pakistan that we wanted where the chief secretary and inspector general are changed every three months," the former governor said. Sarwar said keeping aside everyone's reservations, he vowed to stand behind the prime minister. "On the one hand, there was the prime minister and on the other, it was the entire PTI." "Bribery has reached the grassroots levels, but we vowed to stand with Imran Khan." The ex-governor said that when he had presented the proposal of resigning voluntarily, then why was there a need to dismiss him. "Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Pervez Khattak are witnesses to it." Sarwar said he was asked to do "unconstitutional things". He explained that once Buzdar had resigned from his post, despite it not being approved and notified, the prime minister and PTI leadership asked him to call a session of the Punjab Assembly to elect the new CM. "I asked them to not make me do illegal things [...] I told them that they can have me resign, but I will not do unconstitutional acts," the ex-governor said. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry, announcing the government's decision, said that PTI leader Omer Sarfaraz Cheema has been appointed as the new Punjab governor.

Iran says agreement in Vienna nuclear talks 'close'

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said Sunday an agreement is "close" in paused negotiations to restore the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and world powers. Iran has been engaged in negotiations to revive the deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), with France, Germany, Britain, Russia and China directly, and the United States indirectly. "We are close to an agreement in the negotiations," Amir-Abdollahian said during a phone conversation with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, according to a statement by the ministry. Iranian and US delegations in Vienna do not communicate directly, but messages are passed through other participants and the European Union, the talks' coordinator. "We have passed on our proposals on the remaining issues to the American side through the EU senior negotiator, and now the ball is in US court," Iran's top diplomat added. According to the Iranian statement, Guterres stressed the importance of the Vienna talks and expressed hope that the parties would reach an agreement as soon as possible. Nearly a year of negotiations brought the parties close to renewing the landmark 2015 accord. But the talks were halted last month, after Russia demanded guarantees that Western sanctions imposed following its invasion of Ukraine would not damage its trade with Iran.

EU-China summit for stability in Ukraine

President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said: "We underlined, that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is not only a defining moment for our continent, but also for our relationship with the rest of the world"

DNA

BRUSSELS: The European Union and China held their 23rd bilateral Summit via videoconference on 1 April 2022. President of the European Council, Charles Michel, and President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, held the Summit meeting with China's Prime Minister Li Keqiang, followed by exchanges with China's President Xi Jinping. President of the European Council Charles Michel said: "As major global powers, the EU and China must work together on stopping Russia's war in Ukraine as soon as possible. We have a common responsibility to maintain peace and stability, and a safe and sustainable world. Key international norms and principles must be respected. We count on China's support to achieve a lasting cease-

fire, to stop the unjustifiable war and address the dramatic humanitarian crisis it has generated." President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen said: "We underlined, that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is not only a defining moment for our continent, but also for our relationship with the rest of the world. There must be respect for international law, as well as for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. China, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has a special responsibility. No European citizen would understand any support to Russia's ability to wage war. We also discussed how to cooperate on several issues like global food security, climate change and the fight against COVID."

Russia's military aggression against Ukraine: The EU and China discussed extensively Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, which is endangering global security

and the world's economy, as well as food and energy security. The EU highlighted that its key priority is to stop Russia's unjustified and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, a sovereign country and a key EU partner. The EU also emphasised the importance for Russia to allow humanitarian access and safeguard humanitarian corridors, and to refrain from targeting civilian population and infrastructure. Recalling the EU's and China's responsibility as global actors to work for peace and stability, the EU called on China to support efforts to bring about an immediate end to the bloodshed in Ukraine, consistent with China's role in the world as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and its uniquely close relations with Russia. The EU underlined that Russia's invasion of Ukraine violated key norms and principles of international law as expressed in the UN Charter and the foundational documents of the OSCE,

notably respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. By doing so, Russia purposefully undermined Europe's security architecture, including the Helsinki Final act, the Charter of Paris and the Budapest Memorandum, to which it is party. The EU recalled that the international sanctions against Russia were imposed with the sole purpose of stopping Russia's aggression and despite a significant economic impact on the EU and its partners globally. Any circumvention of the effects of the sanctions or any aid provided to Russia would prolong the bloodshed and lead to even greater losses of civilian lives and economic disruption. The EU will work with its partners to bring Russia and those responsible for Russia's war against Ukraine and for any violations of international and international humanitarian law to account. Any attempts to circumvent sanctions or to aid Russia by other means must be stopped.

At least six dead in California shooting
A video posted online showed people scuffling in the street, then starting to run as gunfire can be heard

SAN FRANCISCO: At least six people were killed and nine more wounded in a shooting in the California state capital of Sacramento early Sunday, police said. "Officers located at least 15 shooting victims, including 6 who are deceased," Sacramento police said in a statement on Twitter. In an earlier tweet at just after 4.00 am (1100 GMT) they had called for people to avoid the area "as a large police presence will remain and the scene remains active." A video posted online showed people scuffling in the street, then starting to run as gunfire can be heard. AFP could not verify the footage. The shooting occurred in the downtown area, which has many bars and restaurants. Police provided few other details. It is the latest mass casualty shooting in the United States, where firearms are used in approximately 40,000 deaths a year, including suicides, according to the Gun Violence Archive website. Lax gun laws and the right to bear arms have repeatedly stymied attempts to clamp down on the number of weapons in circulation, despite greater controls being favored by the majority of Americans. – Agencies

Taliban restrict women's rights as isolation looms

DNA

KABUL: By going back on girls' education and tightening restrictions against women, the Taliban are going against key conditions set by Western donors for much-needed economic assistance. The Taliban are putting dress codes in place for women in Afghanistan. Since the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021, rising living costs and unemployment have left many people with barely enough money to buy food. However, the Taliban government has no solution for stopping the collapse of Afghanistan's economy. Instead, the Islamist militant group has decided to focus on setting up rules of conduct and dress codes for women based on a fundamentalist interpretation of Islam. New, stricter, rules are announced almost every day. For example, since Sunday, women are only allowed to board an airplane in the company of a

man. According to a letter sent by the Taliban to the airlines operating in Afghanistan, this applies to both domestic and international flights. However, the Associated Press reported Tuesday that woman have been traveling alone from Kabul airport, a sign that some of the Taliban's orders are being ignored. The Taliban are also set to reintroduce a dress code calling for women to wear burqas that fully cover their bodies. Since March 29, all female employees working in government authorities and ministries have been required to cover their bodies completely. This week, some rules for public life also became stricter. Visiting public parks, for instance, will soon be divided by gender. In the future, women will be granted access only three days a week and access to the parks will be limited to men on the remaining four days. There are also new rules for male employees working for authorities and ministries requiring them to grow a beard, wear traditional

Afghan clothing and pray together. The Taliban also recently backtracked on a promise to allow girls to attend school. Secondary schools for girls will be opened once "appropriate dress codes" are agreed upon for students aged 12 and older, according to a statement issued last week by the Ministry for the "Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice." This ministry was set up in place of the Ministry of Women's Affairs after the Taliban took power in August. "The new restrictions were created by old and uncompromising Taliban leaders," Afghanistan expert Tariq Farhadi told DW. An advisor to former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, Farhadi believes that the radical wing of the Taliban has prevailed in an internal power struggle. "For them, ideology is more important than the welfare of the citizens. They have no interest in the Taliban's rule being recognized by the world community," he said.

Civilian killings: Russia accused of war crimes

Ukraine's Kuleba called for G7 nations to impose immediate "devastating" sanctions against Russia as a result. But despite Western action targeting oligarchs and businesses – and calls to go further – the Kremlin said it was not possible to isolate Russia entirely

DNA

BUCHA: Ukraine and Western nations on Sunday accused Russian troops of war crimes after the discovery of mass graves and "executed" civilians near Kyiv, prompting vows of action at the International Criminal Court. Britain, France, Germany, the US and NATO all voiced horror at Ukrainian reports on Saturday of nearly 300 bodies lying in the street in Bucha, with some appearing to have been bound by their hands and feet before being shot. City mayor Anatoly Fedoruk told AFP that 280 other bodies had been buried in mass graves. One rescue official said 57 people were found in one hastily dug trench behind a church. About 10 were either unburied or only partially covered by earth. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba called it a "deliberate massacre" while President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russian forces were committing "genocide". His

Russia pulls back from Ukraine's north

KYIV: The Ukrainian military said Russian troops have completed their pull-back from the country's north. The military's General Staff said that Russian units have withdrawn from areas in the country's north to neighbouring Belarus, which served as a staging ground for the Russian offensive. The Ukrainian military said its airborne forces have taken full control of the town of Pripyat just outside the decommissioned Chernobyl nuclear power plant and the section of the border with Belarus. It posted a picture of the Ukrainian soldier putting up the country's flag with a shelter containing the Chernobyl reactor that exploded in 1986 seen in the background. – Agencies

spokesman, Sergiy Nikiforov, said earlier the Bucha killing "looks exactly like war crimes". "We found mass graves. We found people with their hands and with their legs tied up... and with shots, bullet holes, in the back of their head," he told the BBC. "They were clearly civilians and they were executed." US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the killings "a punch to the gut" while NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg said the violence, unseen in Europe for decades, was "horrific" and "absolutely unacceptable". Britain, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union all called for those responsible to be brought to book at the international tribunal in The Hague. Ukraine's Kuleba called for G7 nations to impose immediate "devastating" sanctions against Russia as a result. But despite Western action targeting oligarchs and businesses – and calls to go further – the Kremlin said it was not possible to isolate Russia entirely.

"There can be no complete vacuum or isolation of Russia. It is technologically impossible in the modern world," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Russian state television. The world is "much larger than Europe", he said, adding: "Sooner or later we will have to build a dialogue, whether some overseas want it or not." Europe's worst conflict in decades, sparked by Russia's invasion on February 24, has already left some 20,000 people dead, according to Ukrainian estimates. Nearly 4.2 million Ukrainians have fled the country, with almost 40,000 pouring into neighbouring countries in the last 24 hours alone, the UN refugee agency said. Nearly 6.48 million were estimated to be displaced inside Ukraine, the International Organization for Migration has assessed. Pope Francis, on a visit to Malta on Sunday, made a plea for refugees fleeing the "sacriligious war" in "tormented Ukraine" to be welcomed. Several Western leaders, including US President Joe Biden, have already accused Russia's Vladimir Putin of being a "war criminal".