



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, April 07, 2022

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### India's noncompliance with UN resolutions threaten peace

Detailed News On Page-08

### Pak-Azerbaijani relations at highest level

Detailed News On Page-07



### Al Qaeda leader releases video message

Detailed News On Page-08



## Briefs

### Fresh elections crucial

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Chaudhry Fawad Husain on Wednesday

said fresh elections were the only way forward to ensure political stability in the country. Talking to the media, he said the national economy had been affected and it would be harmed further if the political instability prolonged. Rupee was depreciating against dollar every day. Fawad said economic gains were fragile and prolonged political uncertainty would result in huge economic loss to the country.

### Political future of PTI over

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz has declared that the political future of Imran Khan

and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was over. In a couple of tweets uploaded on Wednesday, Maryam Nawaz said "The political future of Imran Khan and PTI is over now, God willing. But Pervez Elahi should not be a part of his crimes while he knows that these tactics of Imran will not last long. It is incomprehensible why a political person would play a losing game." In another tweet, she said "Not surprisingly, Imran Khan made a spectacular display of country, constitution, law, rules and procedures to avoid arrest. Bullies do just that."

### Fazl for protecting constitution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman has demanded

a guarantee from the judiciary, establishment and parliament to protect the Constitution remaining within their institutional limits. Maulana Fazlur Rehman addressed a press conference on Wednesday and demanded the Supreme Court of Pakistan to declare the ruling of the Dy Speaker null and void.

## Dy Speaker's ruling SC seeks to wrap up case today

### The hearing was adjourned till Thursday morning after the courts failed to reach a judgment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court adjourned the hearing on the "unconstitutional" ruling by National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri to impede the vote of no-confidence against Prime Minister Imran Khan for the fourth consecutive day. The CJ had taken suo motu notice of the constitutional crisis that erupted after Suri disallowed voting on the motion, deeming it "unconstitutional" – a move that the Opposition said was a blatant violation of the Constitution. At the outset of the hearing, PML-N's counsel Nazeer Tarar maintained that the Punjab advocate-general had assured to hold the provincial assembly session today. "Punjab Assembly deputy speaker's directives are not being implemented." Responding to this, CJ Bandial said that a very important case is being heard in this court.

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### Propose dates for elections; President to ECP

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The President's Secretariat has asked Election Commission of Pakistan to propose dates for holding general elections within ninety days from the date of dissolution of the National Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. In a letter by the President's Secretariat, the Election Commission of Pakistan has been conveyed that clause 5(A) of the Article 48 and clause 2 of Article 224 of the constitution provide that the President shall appoint a date,

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister AJK, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi calls on interim Prime Minister Imran Khan. DNA

## US sanctions Putin's family, Russian banks

### The new sanctions will put full blocking sanctions in Russia's Sberbank

CENTRELINE REPORT

WASHINGTON: The United States targeted Russian banks and elites with a new package of sanctions on Wednesday that includes banning any American from investing in Russia, after Washington and Kyiv accused Moscow of committing war crimes in Ukraine. The new sanctions will put full blocking sanctions in Russia's Sberbank (SBER.MM), which holds one-third of Russia's total banking assets, and Alfa-bank, a senior U.S. official told reporters.

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### Russian forces pound key cities

NEWS DESK

LVIV: Artillery pounded key cities in Ukraine on Wednesday, as its president urged the West to act decisively in imposing new and tougher sanctions being readied against Russia in response to civilian killings widely condemned as war crimes. Western sanctions over

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan H.E. Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki handing over dates and Holy Quran during Holy Month of Ramzanul Mubarak at Maktabal Dawah. – APP

### Saudi envoy distributes ration, dates

### Ambassador Nawaf also distributed the copies of holy Quran

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki on Wednesday distributed rations and dates among the deserving people. He, on behalf of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, also distributed the copies of holy Quran, translated into Urdu, Sindhi and Pashto languages. He, reviewing the shipments, said the Saudi government dispatched a great quantity of groceries in various areas of Pakistan for the vulnerable segments of the society every year particularly in the holy month of Ramadan.

### Usman Buzdar denies allegations

LAHORE: Former Punjab chief minister Usman Buzdar on Wednesday denied allegations levelled by the Opposition and estranged PTI leaders against PM Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi and her close friend Farah Khan. "I vehemently deny the fabricated allegations levelled by Aleem Khan, Chaudhry Sarwar and other members of the Opposition and condemn them because there is no proof," tweeted Buzdar. Former chief minister maintained that political transfers in Punjab during his time were solely carried out on the basis of "merit and rules and regulations". – DNA

## Shehbaz holds PM responsible for economic turmoil

### Says it is unfortunate that Pakistan is not economically independent

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif said Prime Minister Imran Khan made the real conspiracy by putting Pakistan in economic turmoil. Shehbaz Sharif levelled the accusations in his recent statement released on Wednesday. The former opposition leader in NA said the prime minister will be solely responsible if the Pakistan faces economic turmoil. He added that a country, having a strong economy, can overcome any hurdle and foil conspiracy. The PML-N president expressed concerns on the thought of the country facing a economic default. He claimed foreign news agencies are expressing fears over the country's economic situation. Shehbaz Sharif said that a downward spiral in the economy will lead to staggering inflation. It will need our utmost attention. He claimed that political instability will lead

Continued on Page 06

### NA Speaker writes letter to Imran, Shehbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: For the establishment of a parliamentary committee to appoint the caretaker Prime Minister, the National Assembly (NA) Speaker has written a letter to Acting Prime Minister Imran Khan and Opposition Leader Shehbaz Sharif under Article 224A(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan on Wednesday. According to a private news channel, NA Speaker Asad Qaiser sought the nomination of a total of eight members for the parliamentary committee, four members each from the Acting PM and the OL to appoint the caretaker PM. According to the Article 224A(1), in case

Continued on Page 06

## All parties should stay united: China

DNA

BEIJING: China says all parties in Pakistan could stay united and uphold national development and stability. This was stated by Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson, Zhao Lijian while responding to a question during briefing in Beijing about current political situation in Pakistan. "As ironclad friend of Pakistan, We hope all parties in the country can stay united and uphold

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## Inside...

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Business community wants peace in Ukraine – Page 03

Ramazan package distributed among 102 needy families – Page 04

New consumer protection law in Saudi Arabia – Page 05

EU toughening sanctions to keep maximum pressure – Page 06

Azerbaijani-Pakistani relations are at the highest level: Envoy – Page 07

Pakistan's economic growth to moderate to 4% in FY22 – Page 08

## Opp. symbolic session elects Hamza as new CM

### The chief minister's office had fallen vacant after PTI's Usman Buzdar resigned following PM Imran Khan's decision to nominate PML-Q's Pervaiz Elahi as the new CM

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: The Opposition's symbolic Punjab Assembly session elected PML-N leader Hamza Shahbaz as the chief minister after the government sealed off the provincial assembly. Members from the PML-N, PPP, PTI's Jahangir Khan Tareen and Abdul Aleem Khan groups attended the session, with PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz also present. PML-N leader and MPA Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan has claimed that more than 200 MPAs are present at the hotel for the session. After the resolution to elect Hamza as the new chief minister was accepted, the session witnessed loud chants, including "chief minister, Hamza Shahbaz". The Tareen and Aleem groups have parted ways with the PTI and Prime Minister Imran Khan and

Continued on Page 06



LAHORE: PML N Vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Hamza Shehbaz and others coming to attend the symbolic session held in a local hotel as the Punjab Assembly was declared out of bound area for the MPs. – DNA

## PTI files no-trust motion against own PA dy speaker

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was jolted by an "earthquake" on Wednesday in Punjab where it has submitted a no-confidence motion against its own deputy speaker of the provincial assembly. Meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) on Wednesday submitted a no-confidence motion against Punjab Assembly Speaker and PTI candidate for chief minister slot Pervaiz Elahi. PML-N delegation comprising of Khawaja Salman Rafique, Samiullah Khan, Khalik Zahir Sindhu and Maulana Pir Ashraf Rasool visited

Punjab Assembly Secretariat and filed the no-trust motion with the assembly secretary. The PTI's motion against Deputy Speaker Sardar Dost Muhammad Mazari was submitted in the office of the Assembly Secretary after which the deputy speaker cannot summon the assembly session. A big rift appeared in the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) after the party brought a no-confidence motion against its own Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari. However, Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker Dost Mazari asserted that he still could chair the session of the assembly despite a no-confidence motion against him.

# Ramadan iftar dinner hosted for diplomats and celebrities

DNA

KARACHI: The Mehran Hotel Management hosted Iftar and Dinner for the diplomats of different countries and prominent Celebrities. The Iftar and Dinner was attended by Martin Dawson, Deputy Head of Mission of the British Deputy High Commission, Damiriy A. Petrov, Acting Consul General of Russia, katsunori Ashida, Acting Consul General of Japan, Consul General Ashida Nouri, Oguz KOZANLI, Vice Consul of Turkey, Mohammed Atiqur Rahman, Acting Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh, Ms. Martha Monterisi, Second Secretary Bilateral Prosperity British Deputy High Commission

UK, prominent Actors Tipu Sharif, Farhan Ali Agha, Adnan Shah Tipu and other dignitaries attended the event. Executive Manager Yasir Ahmed welcomed the guests along with the staff of the hotel. On this occasion, guests from different countries were invited to attend the event. I am grateful for the invitation. Martin Dawson, Deputy Head of Mission, British Deputy High Commission, said that Karachi is a peaceful city and normal activities are going on here without any hindrance. Hotel Mehran is a good hotel in the city. Consul General Japan Ashida Nouri, spoke to the media in Urdu. He said that he loves to eat Pakistani food. Hotel Mehran

has the same standard as other hotels. Great items were kept in Iftar. Acting Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh Muhammad Atiqur-Rehman, said that this is my second visit to hotel. Once upon a time I visited Hotel Mehran. The atmosphere here is very good. Pakistani continental and Chinese food is of high quality and delicious. The Vice Consul of Turkey Oguz KOZANLI, said that Ramadan is a holy month for Muslims and this month we should observe the holy month by fasting. General Manager of the hotel Rehan Faiz Pirzada said that this has been the tradition of Hotel Mehran. That we invite guests at different times. Today diplomats

from different countries have honored us by attending Iftar and dinner. Pakistani continental and Chinese food is our identity in the hotel. Decide what is the quality of food and service. Adnan Shah Tipu said that Ramadan has started. Eid will come later and people of the whole country will celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with religious fervor and enthusiasm. Farhan Ali Agha said that Pakistan is our identity. We have to stay in this country. We have to come back. Because our life and death are with this country. At the end of the ceremony, the birthday cake of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Mustafa Kerani's sister Zahra Kerani was cut.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Sherry Rehman talking to media outside of Supreme Court of Pakistan. – DNA

## 2.6 million saplings planted in Faisalabad division

FAISALABAD: The Forest Department has planted more than 2.6 million saplings in Faisalabad division during recent tree plantation campaign. According to Divisional Director Forest Department (Extension) Muhammad Ali, the department was given a target of 4.229 million trees for their plantation Faisalabad division during current drive. Out of these trees, 2.6 million saplings were planted so far across the division including more than 600,000 trees in Faisalabad district; he said and hoped that the remaining target would also be achieved within stipulated time period. – APP

## Cotton factory gutted

FAISALABAD: Precious material was reduced to ashes when fire engulfed a cotton factory in the limits of Dijkot police station. According to a police spokesman, fire erupted in a cotton factory situated at Samundri Road near Salooni Jhal due to sparking in a machine. The fire engulfed the entire surroundings and burnt precious material present and machinery in the factory. Three fire fighting vehicles of Rescue 1122 rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control after hectic efforts of many hours. However, no loss of life in this incident was reported. – APP

## shopkeepers fined on profiteering

DNA

FAISALABAD: Price control magistrates have imposed Rs.132,000 fine on 61 shopkeepers on the charge of profiteering in the district during the past 12 hours. A spokesman for local administration said on Wednesday that the magistrates inspected various shops in different markets and bazaars of Faisalabad and found dozens of shopkeepers involved in profiteering and overcharging.

## SF serving neglected segment of society

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Sheikh Foundation (SF) is serving the neglected segments of the community for the last 15 years and the charity and this philanthropy work will continue in the future with the blessings of Allah Almighty, said Mian Mohammad Idress President SF. Addressing the executive committee meeting of the SF which was held with a gap of two years due to coronavirus, he said that the price spiral has hit the destitute hard and hence we must enhance the sustenance allowance particularly for the widows from Rs. 2000 to 3,000. He said that SF is also offering multidimensional facilities by offering marriage packages, educational scholarships, Ramzan packages, health facilities and interest free loans to start new businesses. He said that SF has

evolved a comprehensive and transparent strategy to ensure distribution of Zakat, Sadqa and charity to really deserving families and individuals. He appreciated the contribution of the members of the Sheikh Community and said that we must approach the absent members so that they could also contribute their role for the help of hard-pressed families. He said that as per previous practice five thousand ration parcels and 5,000 suit pieces would be distributed this year. The value of each ration pack will be Rs. 5,000 and it would include 5kg cooking oil, 4kg sugar, 5kg basmati rice, 1kg gram pulse, 1kg masur, 2kg gram flour, one bottle of syrup, 190 gram tea, half kg vermicelli and 1kg date. Vice President SF Engineer Rizwan Ashraf presented the balance sheet of the last two years and said that although we could not hold the executive meet-

ings, our charity continued throughout these years. He said that 1500 families had got educational scholarships while 700 are still on the payroll of SF. He said that some students are studying 'engineering, CA and MBBS. Mr. Shafi Rafi announced to donate 100 suit pieces for men while Muhammad Arshad Acchi assured to provide 2500 ladies' suits. The meeting was also attended by Mian Imran Ghafoor, Shabbir Hussain Chawla, SM Iqbal, Dr. Ejaz Nisar, Mohammad Yousuf Moti, Rehan Ashraf, Ahmad Sulman Zahid, Bilal Waheed, Jawad Shafiq, Mohammad Saleem Chawla, Mohammad Bilal Chawla, Sheikh Mohammad Khalid, Khawaja Mohsin Qamar, Zahid-ur-Rehman, Asif Abdul Rehman, Tayyab Rehman, Ittefaq Ahmed, Adeel Fayyaz, Haji Abdul Kashid, Mohammad Farooq, Hafiz Mohammad Hanif, Zulfiqar Ahmed and Saqib Naseem.

# International institutions lauded NAB's anti-corruption policy



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Honourable Justice Javed Iqbal has said that more than 50,000 character building societies have been set up in universities across the country to provide awareness to the youth about the dangers of corruption. NAB's anti-corruption awareness policy has been praised by Transparency International, World Economic Forum, Global Peace Canada, PILDAT and other reputable organisations. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has introduced a new concept of Combine Investigation Team (CIT) for effective investigation of cases, which has benefited from the experience and collective wisdom of the investigating officers and has not only verified complaints, inquiries and investigations but also completed them. On the contrary, out of 179 mega corruption cases, 66 mega corruption cases were brought to a logical conclusion by the esteemed accountability courts. He expressed these views while addressing a review meeting on NAB's awareness policy. The meeting was attended by Deputy Chairman NAB Zahir Shah, Prosecutor General Accountability Syed Asghar Haider and other senior officials. The NAB Chairman said that the World Economic Forum and Transparency International have appreciated NAB's anti-corruption awareness and prevention policy which is a source of pride for Pakistan. He said that under Section 33C of the NAB Ordinance

1999, the NAB has the power to raise awareness and prevent corruption. The NAB's policy of educating the public about the ill effects of corruption has been successful. The NAB, in collaboration with various NGOs, media, civil society and other sections of the society, has launched an awareness campaign to educate the public, especially the youth, about the ill effects of corruption in such an early age. NAB's media wing has effectively highlighted NAB's awareness and remedial efforts through print, electronic and social media which has been appreciated by all sections of the society. He said that the present management of NAB has taken several steps to curb corruption. Excellent results of these measures have reported. He said that due to effective prosecution of NAB during the last four years from 2017 to December 2021, the accountability courts had convicted 1405 accused while the NAB had directly and indirectly recovered Rs 584 billions and the recovered amount have been deposited in the national treasury. Which is the best performance of NAB as compared to any anti-corruption agency. The money recovered by NAB was returned to thousands of victims of housing societies and various departments. He said that NAB was committed to bring mega corruption cases to a logical conclusion by following the policy of "Accountability for All" for complete eradication of corruption from Pakistan all the resources are being utilised to achieve the goal of corruption eradication.

The logical conclusion of corruption cases, assets in excess of sources of income, fraud / illegal housing societies / cooperative housing societies through mass fraud to the public and Mudaraba / Musharaka scandals is the top priority of the NAB. He said that today NAB has become a dynamic and dignified institution. About 1237 references of corruption are under trial right now in accountability courts across the country and their total value is about 1335 billion rupees. Reputable national and international organizations such as PILDAT, Mashal Pakistan, Transparency International, the World Economic Forum and Global Peace Canada have praised NAB's anti-corruption efforts. According to a Gallup and Gilani survey, 59% of people trust the NAB, which is an expression of public confidence in the best performance of the NAB. He said that youth are our future and NAB has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Higher Education Commission to make the youth aware of the ill effects of corruption. The results of establishing youth character building societies in universities have been excellent. More than 50,000 character building societies have been formed across the country with regular meetings and are playing a vital role in creating awareness among the youth in universities and colleges about the ill effects of corruption. He said that the nation has now come to know that corruption is the mother of all evils and it needs to be tackled with iron fists.

# Commissioner for facilitating people during Ramadan

Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmed said that 5 wheat procurement centers have been set up in Lodhran district including Dunyapur, Jalla Arain, Zakhira, Qutbpur and Chit Nahar

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHARAN: Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmed has said that measures should be taken to provide all possible facilities to the people during the holy month of Ramadan. The district administration should pay special attention to the availability of basil, flour, sugar, onion, garlic, tomato, egg, chicken, mutton, beef, rice, ghee and oil in Ramadan bazaars. He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Capt R Shoaib Ali, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Azuba Azeem, Assistant Commissioner Lodhran Farhan Mujtaba and other administrative officers on the occasion. Commissioner Multan Division reviewed the quality of items provided in Ramzan Bazaar and the sale at fixed rates. The effort is visible and the situation here is much better. He also gave instructions to increase the facilities in Ramadan Bazaar. He said that people are coming from far and wide to avail the facility of quality and cheap food items in Ramadan Bazaar. He said that items are being sold in Ramadan Bazaar at prices lower than normal market. Commissioner Multan said that the administrative officers are keeping a close watch on the prices of food items and monitoring is going on continuously. He said that giving subsidies

on food items was a revolutionary step of the Punjab government. He said that 10 kg bags of flour were being sold at Rs. 450 and sugar at Rs. 80 per kg in Ramadan bazaars. He further said that a discount of Rs. 10 is being given from ghee and cooking oil market. He said that according to government orders, Ramadan bazaars are open all day from 9 am to 6 pm for the convenience of the people. He said that flour was available in large quantities in Ramadan bazaars which was constantly monitored by the food department and district administration. He said that the district adminis-

trative officers were also constantly monitoring the sale and availability of flour at fixed prices in the general market including Ramadan bazaars. He said that in view of public convenience, uninterrupted supply of essential items in Ramadan bazaars is also being ensured so that essential items are available in abundance to the consumers. A waiting room, medical camp and grievance cell have also been set up. He said that the price lists of all the essential items available in the Ramadan Bazaar are also displayed prominently. Commissioner Multan while in-

specting the cheap Ramadan Bazaar at Model Bazaar Lodhran reviewed the sale, quality and availability of food items at fixed prices. On this occasion, he also checked the quality of sugar, fruits, vegetables and other items in the Ramadan Bazaar and also checked the weight of flour bags on the stalls and directed to ensure their abundant supply. Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmed inspected the weighing process of a truck full of wheat under his supervision. He had arrived at the wheat procurement center in Jalalabad on a surprise

visit. Commissioner Multan Division reviewed all the arrangements for procurement of wheat. He said that the process of procurement of wheat from farmers was going on smoothly. He said that as per the policy of Punjab government, the food department would procure 95,764 metric tonnes of wheat from Lodhran district this year. He said that the Punjab government has fixed the per capita price of wheat at Rs. 2200.

He was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Capt (R) Shoaib Ali, Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Azuba Azeem, Assistant Commissioner Dunyapur Aitzaz Anjum, District Food Controller Zaheer Ahmad Mayo and other administrative officers. Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmed said that 5 wheat procurement centers have been set up in Lodhran district including Dunyapur, Jalla Arain, Zakhira, Qutbpur and Chit Nahar. He further said that 24,764 metric tonnes of wheat would be procured from Dunyapur Center, 21,500 metric tonnes from Jalla Arain Center, 21,500 metric tonnes from storage, 19,000 metric tonnes from Qutbpur Center and 9,000 metric tonnes from Chit Nahar Center. He said that the food department would procure 95,764 metric tonnes of wheat from Dunyapur tehsil alone.



## 17 butchers arrested; five shops sealed over profiteering

PESHAWAR: District administration on Wednesday accelerated crackdown against those involved in hoarding during the holy month of Ramadan and arrested 17 butchers and sealed five shops on Kohat Road and Phandu Road. The teams of district administration led by Assistant Commissioner Nadia Nawaz Dogar conducted a joint operation along with city police. The teams visited different local markets and inspected the availability, quality and prices of edibles. They also checked the edibles available at Ramadan Sahulat Counters established in mega malls and collectively arrested 17 butchers and sealed five shops. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Peshawar has directed all administrative officers for conduct random inspection of bazaars across the district and to take legal action against profiteering. – APP

## Govt Ramazan relief package successfully launched

ISLAMABAD: The Federal government has successfully launched the Ramadan Relief Package through Utility Stores Corporation to provide special subsidy on 19 basic items for the convenience of the people. Special discounts of up to 15% are also being offered on over 1500 items available at utility stores. The Utility Stores Corporation of Pakistan has ensured uninterrupted supply of all items through more than 4,000 stores spread across the country. All the stores across the country are crowded with people. Utility Stores Corporation is providing a large quantities of subsidized items. Consumers are requested to visit the stores early in the day to avoid rush and bring a copy of their ID card with them so that you can easily avail the Ramadan package. More than 1.6 million families have benefited from this package since April 1. This year's Ramadan package of utility stores is also significant because the corporation has adapted its store system to the modern lines of the ERP system in a very short period of time. Which is the largest system of digitization in any government institution, due to which the operational affairs of utility stores have been made fully automated and transparent and during the month of Ramadan, better services are being provided to the customers than before. In order to discourage black marketing and sale of subsidized food items in bulk, the management of the corporation has decided that subsidized items will not be sold in bulk so that more consumers can benefit from the Ramadan relief package. – DNA

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## 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 |
|-----------------------|---------|



## Emergency

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



## Enquiry

|                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Edhi Ambulance.....   | 115       |
| PIA Flight Info.....  | 114       |
| PIA Cargo.....        | 9280979   |
| Railway Inquiry.....  | 117       |
| Railway Exchange..... | 9270831-5 |
| WASA Rawalpindi.....  | 5555489   |
| CAA.....              | 9281092   |



## Hospitals

|                          |            |
|--------------------------|------------|
| CMH.....                 | 5611111    |
| MH.....                  | 5611116    |
| Cantt Hospital.....      | 9270907-11 |
| DHQ.....                 | 5556311-4  |
| RGH.....                 | 9290301-7  |
| Holy Family.....         | 9290322-7  |
| PIMS.....                | 9261170-79 |
| Polyclinic.....          | 9218300-09 |
| Shifa International..... | 4603666    |



## Departments

|                       |            |
|-----------------------|------------|
| CDA.....              | 9221334-43 |
| CDA.....              | 9208301-04 |
| Met Office.....       | 9250360-6  |
| RDA.....              | 5555864    |
| TMA.....              | 5770886    |
| Cantonment Board..... | 9270151-3  |

## Islamabad Metropolitan

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

## Water Tank

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| Islamabad..... | 0321-5744480 |
|----------------|--------------|

# Business community wants peace in Ukraine

Vitalii Zaianchkovskiy, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Ukraine in Pakistan visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and discussed matters of mutual interest with Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President ICCI

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vitalii Zaianchkovskiy, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Ukraine in Pakistan visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and discussed matters of mutual interest with Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President ICCI. Vadym Muraviov, Second Secretary for Economic Issues also accompanied him during his visit to ICCI. Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President, Mian Shaukat Masud former President ICCI, Muhammad Saeed Khan and Ali Akram Khan Executive Members ICCI were also present at the occasion. The Ukrainian envoy said that his country was a reliable partner of Pakistan in energy and food security fields, but the ongoing war has caused significant downfall in business and economic activities besides creating a lot of humanitarian issues. He briefed the business community about the damages caused by the current war in Ukraine to infrastructure and civilian losses. He appealed that the business community should come forward to provide humanitarian aid for the war-affected Ukrainian population of Ukraine including food items and medicines. He



appreciated the humanitarian aid provided by Pakistan to Ukraine and thanked for this kind gesture. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the business community always wanted peace,

which was the basic requirement for promoting business and investment activities in any country and emphasized that the world community should play role for establishing peace in Ukraine so that business and economic activities could flourish that would reduce miseries of

people and improve their living standards. He assured that the business community would fully support all efforts aimed at ending war and restoring peace in Ukraine. Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Mian Shaukat Masud former President ICCI and

others also spoke at the occasion at the occasion and said that the business community was feeling sad over what was happening in Ukraine. They also called for the settlement of the Ukraine issue through negotiations as war was not a better solutions of disputes.

## KOICA grants US\$ 8m to Pakistan for development initiatives

ISLAMABAD: Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has granted around US\$8 million to the government of Pakistan for executing various development projects with the collaboration of the Korean government. The KOICA Pakistan is currently executing four projects that are different stages of implementation, the spokesperson of Embassy of the Republic of Korea told APP in an exclusive chat on Wednesday. She said there were multiple projects between Pakistan and Korea as in the business sector, both the countries were partnering in the automobile, transportation, hydropower, smartphones, and confectionaries production sectors. The Korean Embassy spokesperson further informed that Korea Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA) Pakistan Center was inaugurated by Administrator of the Rural Development Administration (RDA) of the Republic of Korea, Taewoong Hur during his visit with the delegation in August 2021. He also chaired the Joint Symposium for Agricultural Technical Cooperation between both the countries. She further said that the technical Cooperation projects included self-sufficiency of virus free potato seed multiplication by Aeroponic Technique, Chilli production and post-harvest management technology development in Pakistan, and establishment of production technology of major fodder crops in Pakistan. In education sector cooperation, she highlighted that around 1,500 Pakistani students were studying in Korea in undergraduate and graduate programs. - APP

## CDA to install 20 tube wells during ongoing year

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) will install around 20 new tube wells at different locations to improve water supply in the federal capital. Likewise the authority has overcome many issues in water supply system like leakage of supply lines, saving over 10 million gallons per day and increase water pressure. Earlier, he said the capital city was receiving some 32 million gallons of water per day from Simly Dam but now only 18 million gallons of water was being used to meet the need of the city. He said CDA chairman Amer Ali Ahmed had appreciated the efforts of directorate for uninterrupted water supply to federal capital residents. The spokesman add-

ed that the authority had allocated sufficient funds for maintenance of water supply lines to improve water supply system in the federal capital. He said Rs 10 million was specified to repair lines in sectors H, I, F and G series, while Rs 5 million were set aside to fix lines of tube wells installed in Model Village including National Police Academy, Golf Course, Poona Faqiran and Sector H of Islamabad. Similarly, Rs 1 million would be spent for replacement of electrical equipment of various tube wells in I-Series sectors and tenders have been floated in newspapers in that regard. Likewise, he said Rs 5 million for 8" dia AC line of tube wells in Sector H-8/2 and Rs 3.5 million for fixing of 6" dia pipeline in

sector I-9 were earmarked. A budget of Rs 5 million was allocated for replacement of 3", 4" and 6" dia pipelines. In addition, around Rs 5 million has been set aside for the replacement of 3-inch dia ac line in sector I-10/1, while Rs9 million for 10" dia ac line in sector I-10/2 and Rs 4 million for 3" dia JI Line in Margalla Town Phase One, Two and Humak Town of Islamabad. Moreover, Rs 8.5 million has been allocated for the replacement of 12-inch dia PRCC line in sector I-9 and Rs 4 million for replacement of 6-inch dia ac line in sector H-8/4. The authority also specified Rs 8 million for the replacement and improvement of 6" dia pipeline in Sector I-8/4 and I-8/2, he maintained.



RAWALPINDI: A large number of people standing in front of utility store to purchase grocery on subsidized rate. - APP

## SAARC Chamber calls for immediate implementation of COE

ISLAMABAD: President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik Wednesday expressing his grave concern over ongoing political upheaval and rupee depreciation called for immediate implementation of charter of economy to save it from irreparable economic losses. Presiding over core committee meeting of the United Business Group (UBG) to review the ongoing political instability in the country, he said political turmoil is also badly hitting the already poor economy which is also directly responsible for quick depreciation of rupee besides plunging of stock exchange. He lamented that trade deficit also widened 70 percent to \$35.4 billion in the first three quarters of the current fiscal year against \$60 billion and this ever increasing trend must be arrested to save the economy. He said business community, the backbone of economy, will continue playing its role in national development but political stability and business friendly environment are key factors for smooth flow of foreign direct investments and business. He said although exports jumped 25 percent to reach \$23 billion in the first nine months of current fiscal year while in March, it grew 16 percent to \$2.74 billion from \$2.36 billion in the last corresponding period. But what we direly need is a complete ban on luxury items and fostering exports to shrink trade deficit to some extent. - APP

## QAU ranks No 1 in Pakistan, 461 globally by US World Ranking

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: Quaid i Azam University (QAU) Islamabad has been ranked No. 1 in Pakistan and globally ranked 461 by new US World Ranking 2022. According to the latest US World Ranking, as many as 21 Pakistani universities have featured in the Best Global Universities for 2022 published by US News and World Report, a Washington-based ranking guide. As per ranking details, Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) leads the chart among Pakistani universities on the list. QAU is followed by Agha Khan University and COMSATS University Islamabad.

Vice Chancellor QAU Prof Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah congratulated the entire faculty, students, staff, alumni for achieving this success. The students and faculties remarked that University continuously improved international ranking under the dynamic leadership of Prof Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah, Vice Chancellor of the Quaid i Azam University. It is worth mentioning here that QAU is only Pakistani university ranked as top university by all international ranking agencies Times World Ranking, QS ranking and Times world ranking.

## Sugarcane to be cultivated over 1.181 mn hectares

ISLAMABAD: Sugarcane crop will be cultivated over 1.181 million hectares during current Kharif season (2022-23) in order to fulfill the domestic requirements of sugar as well as for exporting. Meanwhile, sugarcane production targets during the period under review were fixed at 78.588 million metric tons, said a senior official of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

Talking to media here on Wednesday, he said that about 760,000 hectares of land was set in Punjab to grow sugarcane during current Kharif season in order to produce 52.5 million metric tons of sugarcane. The crop would be cultivated over 310,000 hectares in Sindh to produce about 19.950 million metric tons of sugarcane, he said adding that it would be cultivated over 110,000 hectares in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and 1,000 hectares in Balochistan provinces respectively. The sugarcane output targets for current season for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan were fixed at 6.086 million tons and 52,000 tons in Balochistan respectively, he added. He further informed that sugarcane was a tropical crop cultivated mainly in Jhang, Faisalabad, Sargodha, and Toba Tek Singh districts of Punjab Province. - APP

## Women-led psychological group grows popular

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: A support group dedicated to resolve mental health and life related issues of youth and women is gaining traction among the residents of twin cities since the pandemic hit the country. The founders of Smart Wellness Circle (SWC) Safirah and Amer Malik have been operating this small and evolving support system for seven years. Co-founder Safirah Malik told APP, "There are problems in our society. People especially youth are facing difficulties in understanding and managing their personal and professional lives. Women aren't fully aware of their rights and lack proper support in attaining them." "We started this small gathering to assist others in being their best self and live a better life," she added. The support squad that reaches out to people via Facebook primarily however has some strict rules and regulations. The first session acts as both a trial meeting and evaluation forum in which the team permits the candidate to decide whether to avail the membership or not.

## Govts, scientists need to address rising climate risks

Climate Scientist Dr Fahad Saeed highlighted that the IPCC report enforces the risk for the South Asia as one of the hotspots. The report shows that the water has been the most stressed resource which the climate change has ensued

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: South Asia is the most vulnerable region in the face of climate change and thus, collective efforts are the need of the hour to deal with different threats posed by changing weather patterns and increasing risks of natural calamities. The climate change experts said this while sharing their views at a hybrid seminar 'Climate Change Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability: IPCC Working-II Report 2022 lessons and way forward for South Asia' organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). Senior Economist and Food Systems Specialist, Livihoods, ICIMOD, Nepal, Dr Abid Hussain, asserted that almost all the findings of the report are very relevant to the South Asia region. He was of the view that environmental sustainability is a cross cutting theme

for all types of sustainability. Referring to the IPCC report, he said that 54 % of Pakistan consists of mountainous areas. Hence, inclusion of the mountains ecosystem in the report is of high importance for Pakistan. Besides, gender centric issues are of specific mention in the report, he added. Climate Scientist Dr Fahad Saeed highlighted that the IPCC report enforces the risk for the South Asia as one of the hotspots. The report shows that the water has been the most stressed resource which the climate change has ensued. Changes in climate has already impacted the lives of the people already living on higher mountains, and mangroves in the coastal areas are also being depleted. Besides, Climate Change has triggered heatwaves in urban areas and has been impacting food viability, and increasing incidence of diseases, such as dengue and malaria.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, earlier emphasized that the governments and scientists need to dwell on the magnitude of the problem presented by the IPCC report. South Asia was first time declared as the most vulnerable to the climate change and with impacts so glaring on all aspects of life as this report has signified, he added. Director, Climate Action Network South Asia, Mr Sanjay Vashisht, viewed that the IPCC report says that the climate change has already done substantial damages. Now is the era of adaptation and loss and damages control, where 50-75% of the global population could be exposed to periods of life-threatening climatic conditions. He highlighted that the IPCC report says that by 2030 the number of people living below poverty line will be increased multi-fold due to the climate change. Ms. Aisha Khan, Chief Executive, Civil So-

ciety Coalition for Climate Change, Pakistan, highlighted that the report comprehensively covers all the forthcoming impacts of the climate change and the needs for adaptation. She suggested that we need to create a synergy among the mitigation and adaptation plans and work as a partner in face of the climate change. Dr. Imran Khalid, Director, WWF, Pakistan suggested that the cross-cutting themes for the region like the air pollution, and water should be dealt with on priority. Dr Hina Aslam, Research Fellow, SDPI, informed the participants that energy transition lies at the center of the climate change adaptation. Hydropower generation and cooling water demands have decreased, which critically analyses the impacts of climate change on the energy. Mr Kashif Majeed Salik, Associate Research Fellow, SDPI, earlier highlighted different aspects of IPCC report.

## Briefs

SNGPL, SSGC  
repair 887-  
km pipelines

ISLAMABAD: The Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) have collectively repaired around 887-kilometer faulty pipelines and rectified 1447,342 leakages in line with the government strategy to bring down the Unaccounted for Gas (UFG) ratio.

Besides, the companies' experts inspected around 13,388 Town Border Stations (TBSs) and rectified 633 stations after finding them leaked, according to an official document available with APP.

The state utilities have installed Electronic Volume Corrector (EVC) meters at all industrial connections and high-pressure commercial connections that calculate the actual volume of gas consumption, maintain a record of hourly/daily gas consumption and generate a tamper alarm in case of an attempt of magnetic interference with meter or other infrastructure.

Around 1,850 out of 3,655 industrial connections have been integrated with Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) for remote monitoring of industrial consumers for timely identification of gas theft and measurement errors, if any. To control the line losses and bring down the UFG ratio, cyber locks are being installed at industrial meter stations to restrict the access of consumers to the meters and regulators to reduce the chances of gas theft.

The companies are also using Laser Leak Detectors, the best available technique and gadgets, for the identification of underground leakages. "High flow samplers are being used for quantification of leakages."

The UFG losses of SNGPL and SSGC stood at 8.83 per cent and 15.85 per cent respectively during the fiscal year 2020-21. "Volumetric loss of SNGPL remained at 34,021 million cubic feet (mmcf) of gas and SSGC 67,476 mmcf of gas, mainly because of gas leakages, measurement errors and theft." - APP

DC orders  
strict steps  
to check  
hoarding

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Mohammad Hamza Shafaqat on Wednesday has ordered capital administration to expedite the strict crackdown against artificial inflation and profiteers during Ramadan for ensuring smooth supply of eatables. The sale of food items over and above the fixed prices would be intolerable and strict action would be taken against those who did not display price lists at their shops' prominent places, he said while speaking to PTV News. He said that several inspection teams were formed under assistant commissioners and magistrates to ensure regular monitoring of prices of fruits and vegetables across capital city including rural areas. - APP

Ramazan package distributed  
among 102 needy families

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Director KBM Care Foundation Senior Azmat Hanif said that the initiatives from the platform of KBM Care will benefit the people of the area

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Before the start of Ramazan, over 102 families were given Ramazan Package. The package that includes flour, rice, sugar, oil, dates, sugar, black tea, pulses, salt, basin and dry juices by KBM Care Foundation. Under the platform, a water filtration plant having a capacity of 25000 liter per day was

also inaugurated. Speaking on the occasion, KBM Care Foundation CEO Executive Officer KB Majeed thanked all the donors for their generous support to help the deserving families before the start of Ramazan and for the distribution of mechanism was put in place to identify the deserving persons.

He said that the foundation will work to support the families that are in need and also assured to start new



projects that will contribute to the collective prosperity and well-being of the common man of the area. He thanked the administration, notables and Traders Union of the area for their support in conducting the successful ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Director KBM Care Foundation Senior Azmat Hanif said that the initiatives from the platform of KBM Care will benefit the people of the area and we

will continue our efforts to support the deserving families besides initiation of the new projects.

Speaking on the occasion, Assistant Commissioner Sardar Azkar thanked KBM Care for the distribution of the Ramazan Package and assured all out support of the administration in carrying out the humanitarian activities. President Traders Association Sardar Ilyas and others notable of the area also spoke on the occasion.

Railways  
retrieve land  
worth Rs  
4725 mln

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has retrieved land worth Rs 4725.796 million from the illegal occupants during the last one year in operation against the land grabbers across the country. "The encroachment operation is launched with the assistance of railway police and district administration of the provincial government," an official in the Ministry of Railways said. He said Pakistan Railways had retrieved over 502 acres precious land worth billion of rupees from illegal occupants under its anti-encroachment operation across the country during the last three and half years. Giving details, the official said the department retrieved 258 acres land in Punjab, 129 acres from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 97 acres from Sindh and 18 acres from Balochistan. - APP

Over 100 prominent citizens demand  
'Doctrine of Necessity' to be buried

The signatories emphasized the primacy of the Constitution as a sacred covenant between all sections of the society and the ultimate expression of the collective will of the people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Over 100 prominent academics and civil society leaders have written an open letter to Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Umar Ata Bandial demanding no compromise to be made in determining the legality of actions taken by Deputy Speaker of National Assembly Qasim Suri in rejecting the no confidence motion against the Prime Minister.

The letter terms the former government's actions a major threat to the social cohesion

and the wellbeing of the nation. It demands that responsibility should be fixed and exemplary retribution ensured to deter any future excesses. The letter also demanded a judicial commission to be set up comprising serving judges of the Supreme Court to adjudicate the evidence regarding the alleged foreign conspiracy to subvert the political process in the country.

It maintains however that due process cannot be suspended and fundamental right of parliamentarians to vote cannot be violated on the basis of unsubstantiated

allegations. The signatories of the letter include senior educationists, Vice Chancellors, journalists, and human rights activists. They include such names as human rights activists Mr. Haris Khaleeq, Mr. Karamat Ali, Ms. Khawar Mumtaz, Dr. Ammar Ali Jan, lawyer Mr. Salman Akram Raja, Former SAPM on Health Zafar Mirza, Chairperson HEC Dr. Tariq Banuri, journalists Mr Najam Sethi, Mr. Aamir Ghouri and Mr. Mohsin Baig, educationists and writers Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmad, Ms. Salima Hashmi, Dr. Ayesha Razaque

and Gen. Talat Masood, among many others.

The signatories emphasized the primacy of the Constitution as a sacred covenant between all sections of the society and the ultimate expression of the collective will of the people. It observed that unconditional and strict adherence to the Constitution is the only way to establish and sustain a peaceful, civilized and prosperous society and avoid widespread lawlessness and anarchy.

The letter contended that the decision Supreme Court takes today concerning the suprem-

acy of Constitution will shape the destiny and trajectory of our national existence.

The honour and well being of our future generations lie only in adherence to the Constitution and inclusive politics epitomizing mutual acceptance of mandates, level playing field and basic norms of decency, it argues.

The signatories expressed hope that his lordship's unwavering commitment to constitutionalism and unbounded passion for justice will guide the nation through these troubled times.

RCCI call to end  
political uncertainty

Pakistan exports \$ 6.5 billion worth of goods to the United States, while its exports to Europe are close to \$16 billion

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has expressed deep concern over the current economic and political uncertainty in the country. The trade deficit has reached historic levels, the rupee continues to depreciate against the dollar, and foreign exchange reserves are declining sharply. It's a Save Our Souls (SOS) call to the relevant

quarter to address the current situation. In a joint statement President Nadeem Rauf and group leader and former President RCCI Sohail Altaf said that trade relations would have to be kept separate from politics. Pakistan's trade re-

lations with the United States and Europe should be viewed beyond politics. The United States and Europe are important economic partners of Pakistan and both are major export markets for Pakistan.



Pakistan exports \$ 6.5 billion worth of goods to the United States, while its exports to Europe are close to \$16 billion. President Nadeem Rauf said that if immediate steps are not taken then the country will face a severe economic crisis. The

dollar has reached 186 and it is falling further. Political parties have to show prudence and wisdom, he added.

Group leader Sohail Altaf said that it seems that there is no heir. Uncertainty is disastrous for the country's economy; the trade deficit has risen to \$36 billion. With the rupee depreciating, inflation is on the rise and Large scale industry (LSM) is under severe pressure. He said that the business communi-

ty believes that if timely steps are not taken, the situation will spiral out of control, we have to think in the national interest and realize the delicacy of the issue and get the country out of the current economic and political crisis, he added.

'See Paki-  
stan' attract-  
ing huge  
influx

ISLAMABAD: A fascinating Photo Exhibition 'See Pakistan' by M.H. Toori attracting a large number of people in which the unseen beauty of Pakistan creatively is being showcased.

A keen interest was taken by viewers because of the beautiful depiction of nature, historical places and culture of Pakistan the ongoing response was commendable by the audience visited there, an official of PNCA Masroor shah told APP. Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) has extended the show till 15th April 2022.

'See Pakistan' is a fascinating show portraying the diverse natural beauty, historical heritage, and amalgamation of culture and religion of Pakistan. From the grand mountain ranges in the North to the vast alluvial delta of the Indus River in the South remains a blessed land with natural beauty and majestic mountains with world high altitude desert and highest peaks are magnificently photographed by M.H. Toori and are on display in this beautiful show. A large number of the public from various walks of life alongside the press and media visited the exhibition to see the blend of culture and nature in Pakistan.

PTDC, TDAP join  
hands for tourism  
promotion

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) joined hands to organize, arrange and execute domestic and international events for the promotion of tourism.

In this regard, PTDC and TDAP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote tourism in the country, said a statement. The MoU focuses on planning of domestic and international marketing events that include tourism specific exhibitions, exchange of delegations, seminars, workshops, webinars and conferences on tourism and to facilitate private sector to

develop B2B linkages with international counter parts. MD PTDC, Aftab ur Rehman Rana said that PTDC being a dedicated national organization on tourism is utilizing maximum resources to promote tourism in the country and facilitate both the local and foreign tourists, I hope this MoU will further strengthen interaction in terms of international exposure of tourism sector, delegation exchange and foreign tourist arrival increase in Pakistan."

The MoU shall help devise a coherent and unified strategy for the promotion and development of the tourism sector of Pakistan both in domestic and international spheres.

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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman  
Mobile: 0300 8553342

President Alvi asks IIUI to  
enhance online infrastructure

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) to further enhance its physical and online educational infrastructure to increase the number of quality graduates. He further asked the Rector to double the educational shifts in the University and come up with a proposal within 3 months in this regard. The President made these remarks during a briefing on IIUI, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Rector IIUI, Prof. Dr Masood Yasinzai, and senior officials of the University attended the meeting. Addressing the meeting, the President said that the University needed to equip its students with soft skills, such as critical thinking, effective communication and teamwork, besides pro-



viding technical/hard skills. He urged the University to include experts from the market in its Senate, besides developing collaborations with the industry to equip its students with marketable skills. The President also emphasised the need to encourage 2-year Asso-

ciate Degree Programs in order to fulfil the market's growing demand for skilled graduates. Rector IIUI briefed the meeting about the academic programs and new initiatives being undertaken by the University. It was highlighted that IIUI had

approved a new Strategic Plan (2022-26) for promoting growth and academic excellence; increasing research and collaboration; enhancing the financial sustainability of the University; improving the quality of life at the university campus; improving the

Governance and Internal Control mechanism, and digitization of the University. It was underlined that the new Strategic Plan would contribute to the socio-economic and technological environment of the country, besides bringing good governance to the University. The meeting was also briefed about the new initiatives such as the Online and Distance Learning, Directorate of Graduates Studies, Directorate of University Advancement and Promotion, Directorate of Research and Enterprises, and the Office of Linkages. The President appreciated the performance and role of the University in promoting quality education in the country and assured the management of his support in this regard.

Robotics and  
automation  
startup  
challenge

ISLAMABAD, Apr 6 (APP): National Center of Robotics and Automation (NCRA), National University of Science and Technology (NUST) on Wednesday has invited the robotics enthusiasts to participate in the 'Third Robotics and Automation Startup Challenge'.

According to an official of NUST, the intended participants can present their innovative idea, project or startup in the domain of Robotics and Automation and get a chance for a winning prize of PKR 300,000 and runners-up prizes of PKR 25,000.

This is a rewarding opportunity for innovators and researchers working on sustainable and innovative solutions addressing problems of local industry and socio-economic issues of Pakistan.

Robotics and Automation Startup Challenge will comprise over two categories including Indigenous Product Development to Provide Automation Solution to any Local Industry and Indigenous Product Development for Solving Societal Problems using Robotics and Automation, the official informed.

The first category titled Indigenous Product Development to Provide Automation Solution to any Local Industry is focused on the themes including IOT based solutions, Production increase of target industry, Efficient systems, PLC/SCADA based novel solutions, System upgrades/ Machine modifications, Predictive maintenance, Autonomous Control, Autonomous Machines, Warehouse Management, Sensors/ image processing based systems, Condition Monitoring, Reverse Engineering, Cost effective and reliable solutions, Manual to Automated solutions etc.

The second category has themes including Smog Issue, Recycling systems, Waste reduction, Clean drinking water, Water management, Pollution prevention, Safe cities, Educational robots, Energy generation/conservation, Clean energy, Efficient communication tools, Mechanization of labor intensive systems, Medical devices, Agricultural robotics, Unmanned systems, Swarm robotics, Collaborative Robots, Manual to Automated solutions, Products for CPEC etc.

The deadline for submission of concept note is April 10 and the intended participants can register to participate in the challenge through the web link: <http://roboticschallenge.ncra.org.pk/>, the official conveyed.

## Economical woes

PAKISTAN'S economic growth is expected to moderate to 4% in FY2022 due to tighter fiscal and monetary policies before picking up again in FY2023, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a report on Wednesday. According to the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022, ADB's annual flagship economic publication, Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to slow to 4% in FY2022 from 5.6% in FY2021 as the government applies measures to reduce the current account deficit, raise international reserves, and cut inflation. Growth is expected to accelerate to 4.5% in FY2023 due to stronger private consumption and investment.

In FY2022, industrial growth is forecast to decelerate, reflecting fiscal and monetary tightening together with a significant depreciation of the local currency, and upward adjustments to domestic oil and electricity prices. Agriculture is expected to continue lending impetus to GDP growth supported by the government's package of subsidized inputs and increased support prices of wheat and sugarcane. Inflation declined to 8.9% in FY2021 but is expected to pick up in FY2022 to around 11% due to higher international energy prices, significant currency depreciation, and elevated global food prices from supply disruptions. As a net importer of oil and gas, Pakistan will continue experiencing strong inflationary pressures for the remainder of FY2022 from the jump in global fuel prices resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Inflationary pressures are likely to be less pronounced in FY2023, with inflation forecast to drop to 8.5% as fiscal consolidation progresses and oil and commodity prices stabilize. On Monday, The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said that there was "no concept of suspensions" within its programmes and that it will continue to support Pakistan and engage further "once a new government is formed" in the country. The statement from the Washington-based crisis lender comes amid political chaos in the country, especially in the aftermath of President Dr Arif Alvi's dissolution of the National Assembly following the dismissal of the no-confidence against Prime Minister Imran Khan the same day.

According to the IMF-Pakistan spokesperson, the Fund will engage in policies to "promote macroeconomic stability and enquire about intentions vis-a-vis programme engagement" with the new government. The IMF had in June 2019 approved a three-year, \$6bn loan "to support Pakistan's economic plan, aimed at returning "sustainable growth to the country's economy and improving the standards of living".

The 39-month IMF programme is scheduled to end in September.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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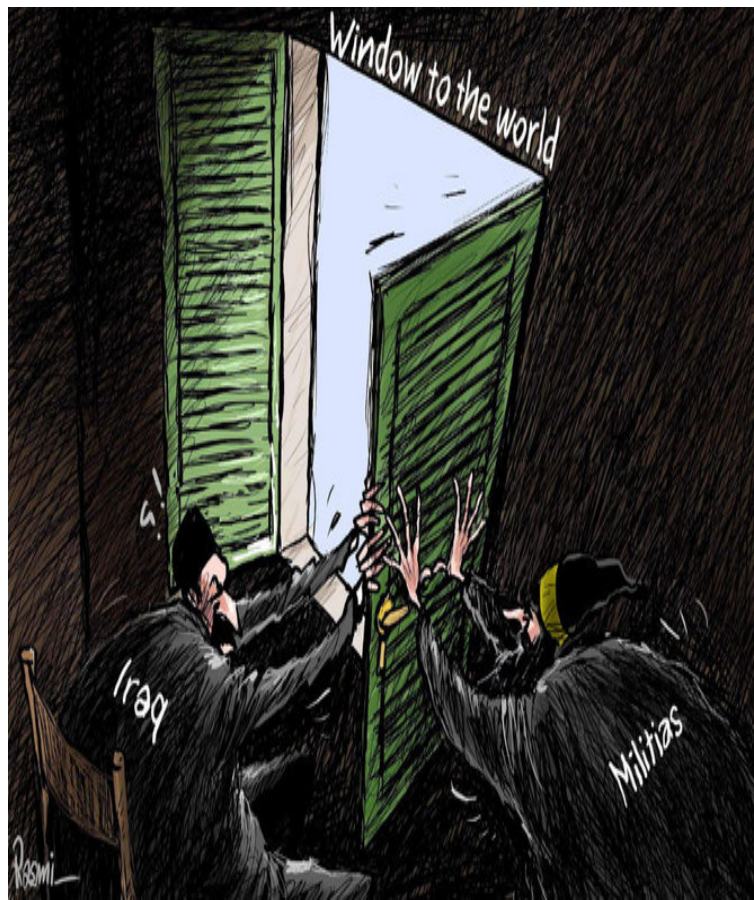
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Vol: 02 Issue: 283

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## South Asian crises over Russia's war

FLYING from Islamabad to Colombo gives a bird's-eye view of the fallout from war over the subcontinent. The three nations under the route are all governed by nationalists who won office by trading in populism. Having gained power, such politicians tend to have a messianic faith in their capacity to effect sweeping change. This belief is being tested, perhaps to destruction, in south Asian democracies with a combined population of 1.6 billion people.

Pakistan's Prime Minister, Imran Khan – who was in Moscow as the tanks rolled into Ukraine – claimed last week that the US had "threatened" him and tried to instigate regime change. Mr Khan has been at loggerheads with the west since Pakistan abstained in the UN resolution condemning Moscow's attack. Over the weekend the nation's army – long considered the power behind the throne – openly sided with Washington. Mr Khan has refused to leave quietly. Instead of facing a no-confidence vote that he would have almost certainly lost, he precipitated a political crisis by dissolving parliament. Pakistan's judges now have the casting vote on the prime minister's fate.

At the other end of the flightpath is Sri Lanka's hardline president, Gotabaya Rajapaksa. He imposed a state of emergency to forestall a popular revolt. With four brothers in the cabinet, the Rajapaksas dominate Sri Lankan politics. Their supremacy is largely down to the damaging polarisation of the country along religious and ethnic lines after a bloody civil war. Mr Rajapaksa's quixotic economic policies came unstuck when the war in Ukraine sent energy and commodity prices soaring. There is little sign of rational measures to halt the downward spiral.

South Asia's biggest strongman is India's prime minister, Narendra Modi. Like Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia, Mr Modi has remained neutral on the war – refusing to condemn Vladimir Putin and sidestepping US-led sanctions. Delhi is caught in a bind. Despite clashes along their shared border, India's trade with China has set new records. While the past decade has seen India deepen security ties with the US to balance Beijing, Russia still provides about half of India's arms imports. This dependence might explain why, when Indian students in Ukraine were being killed by Russian bombs, Mr Modi's ministers blamed them for being in harm's way.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine could shape the contours of a coming wider global struggle between autocracy and democracy. History might side with that perspective – but it seems a straw man argument in a region where the slide into rightwing, nationalist populism should be, right now, a bigger concern.

## US history of interference

Dr M Ali Hamza



In 2005 US interfered in Kyrgyzstan via USAID, Radio Liberty and Freedom House that provided aid to opposition protesters by funding the only opposing print-media...

ISN'T the sovereign state has a complete right to choose its direction for bilateral relations? The simple but naive answer is big "YES". In today's corporate and insanely capitalized world: you may relate it to capitalism or exploitation, the exercise of sovereignty is dependent on economic benefits one can render to the super power in the post-cold-war times under the new world order, or a government that helps in maintaining the hegemony of the self-claimed Global Boss. In case a certain government of any state is unable to fulfill the said purpose, their government is toppled and puppets are brought in. Surly you know who has seized the right to call the shots? The US, and US bluntly uses its right to interfere into the affair of sovereign states, both overtly and covertly, in the replacement of governments. Let's have a look to some examples from the past.

The story of US interference in regime change begins in 1805 at Ottoman Tripolitania (an Ottoman colony in North Africa indirectly ruled through Yusef Karamanli; a pasha of Tripoli) where after many military defeats US decided to try a new tactic. The new tactic was to install Karamanli's exiled brother Hamet Karamanli into Tripolitania, as the Pasha. US

soldiers and hired mercenaries provided backup to Hamet and caused a chaos. Under pressure, Yusef met with US diplomats and saved his government by agreeing to US conditions. Let us leave many more examples unattended, and moving fast forward, during World War II, the US helped overthrow many Nazi German or Imperial Japanese puppet regimes, such as regimes in the Philippines, Korea, the Eastern portion of China, and much of Europe. In the aftermath of World War II, the US government struggled with the USSR for global leadership. A research published in 'Security Studies' reveal that US was engaged in 64 covert and six overt attempts at regime change during the Cold War.

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, United States has led or supported wars to design the governance structure of a number of countries. US interfered in the national elections of Italy, Japan, Philippines and Lebanon in 1948, 1950, 1953, 1957 respectively. According to one study, the U.S. performed at least 81 overt and covert known interventions in foreign elections during the period 1946–2000. US Expansion in Central America and the Caribbean, Iranian coup d'état of 1953, the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion targeting Cuba, and support for the overthrow of Sukarno by General Suharto in Indonesia are undeniable proofs. At the beginning of the 20th century, the United States shaped or installed governments in many countries around the world, including Panama, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic.

Newmillennium is also full of US adventures to screw the foreign governments. In year 2000 US heavily supported opposition groups such as Opor, through the supply of promotional material and consulting services via Quangos, during general elections in Yugoslavia. US provided exposure, resources technological aid and professional advice to the opposition. After 9/11 attacks, US invaded Afghanistan and began bombing the country under the shelter of "War on Terror: a news form of Utilitarianism. Although none of the hijackers were of Afghan nationality but Afghanistan was invaded and self-serving government was installed. Washington based Wilson Center of Scholars, and British online newspaper "The Independent" reports that in 2003 Bush administration claimed that Iraq had connections to Al-Qaeda and was supporting terrorism by producing weapons of mass destruction. Iraq being one of the three countries Bush called "Axis of Evil" was attacked, government was shattered, no production of weapons of mass destruction was found but caused the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the

Levant (ISIL).

In 2005 US interfered in Kyrgyzstan via USAID, Radio Liberty and Freedom House that provided aid to opposition protesters by funding the only opposing print-media outlet in the country. According to the Wall Street Journal, opposition groups and an opposition TV station received funding from the US government and US-based NGOs.

It was published in Christian Science Monitor and The Times (UK) that in 2006, Bush Administration was not happy with the government formed by Hamas that won 56 percent of the seats in the Palestinian legislative election. The US pressured the Fatah faction of the Palestinian leadership to topple the Hamas government, and provided funding. In the same year, though Syria cooperated in the War on Terror, the Bush administration froze relations with Syria. According to US cables released by WikiLeaks, US found funneling money to opposition groups, including at least \$6 million to the anti-government satellite channel Barada TV and the exile group Movement for Justice and Development in Syria: an attempt to topple the government of President Bashar Al-Assad. Again in 2011, after the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, President Obama state unequivocally, that "it is time to go" for President Assad. Resultantly imposed an oil embargo against the Syrian government, started providing training, weapons and cash to Syrian vetted moderate rebels. Thanks to Russia for timely interjecting the evil plan. In 2011, a coalition of 27 states from Europe and the Middle East joined the NATO-led intervention in 'Operation Unified Protector, and toppled the government of Gaddafi. Gaddafi was captured and killed, Libya shattered and even after 11 years Libya continues to struggle to end its violent conflict, build state institutions, and the people are living in a miserable condition. In preview of the documented history, there is less room to doubt a letter that was waved by Prime Minister Imran Khan. The content of the letter is validated by the Security Committee, and confirm the interference of US for regime change in Pakistan. The movement of 'Vote of No-Confidence' seems evidently a repetition of manipulative and historically established tactic by US. A statement by Maria Zakharova, Spokesperson Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "This is another attempt of shameless US interference in the internal affairs of an independent state for its own selfish purposes", grounded in the fact that US is not pleased of losing her hegemony.

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## Who is responsible for climate breakdown?

Jason Hickel

There is a straightforward case for reparations here. And these results can be used as a guide when it comes to adjudicating liability for climate damages

WHO is responsible for climate breakdown? This question has triggered heated debate for several decades now, as the politicians of powerful countries jockey to shift blame and avoid liability for the catastrophic damages that are now cascading around us. But for all the hand-waving, the question of responsibility is in fact quite simple to answer – at least at the level of nation-states. To do it, we need to calculate the extent to which each country's cumulative historical emissions have overshoot their fair share of the "planetary boundary", which scientists have defined as 350 parts per million (ppm) concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere. This boundary was crossed in the late 1980s, and it is possible to identify which countries are most responsible for the excess emissions that are presently causing climate breakdown.

I took this approach in a paper published recently in the journal *Lancet Planetary Health*, and the results are quite striking. The historical record shows that the United States is single-handedly responsible for 40 percent of excess global CO2 emissions. The European Union and the United Kingdom are together responsible for 29 percent. And along with the rest of Europe, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Israel and Japan, the Global North as a group is collectively responsible for no less than 92 percent. Meanwhile, the Global South – the entire continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America – are responsible for only 8 percent of excess emissions. And that's from only a handful of countries, such as around the Gulf. The majority of countries in the Global South still remain within their fair shares of the planetary boundary, including large nations like India, Indonesia and Nigeria. Even China was within its fair share as of 2015, the final year of data in this study, although it has since overshoot the limit. Social movements in the Global South have long argued that we should understand climate breakdown as a process of atmospheric colonisation. And they are correct. The atmosphere is a shared commons, on which all of us depend for our existence. Just as powerful countries enriched themselves by appropriating land, labour and resources from the South during the colonial period, so too they have appropriated the atmospheric

commons, with devastating consequences for all of life on Earth. To make matters worse, the impacts of climate breakdown fall disproportionately on the countries of the Global South, which suffer the vast majority of climate change-induced damages and mortality within their borders, and where extreme weather is already causing crop failure, food insecurity, and mass displacement. Research on climate vulnerability at the University of Notre Dame finds that developing countries are significantly more at risk than their richer counterparts in virtually every category for which we have data.

The disparities here are stark. If you look at a map showing countries by emissions overshoot alongside a map showing countries by climate vulnerability, you'll see that the two are almost exact inverses of each other. In other words, not only does climate breakdown represent processes of atmospheric colonisation, but the consequences are playing out along colonial lines. And those who have done the least to cause this crisis are suffering the most. It would be difficult to overstate the scale of this injustice. If we are not attentive to the colonial dimensions of climate breakdown, then we are missing the point.

There is a straightforward case for reparations here. And these results can be used as a guide when it comes to adjudicating liability for climate damages. Overshooting countries should be held liable for the costs of climate-related damages, wherever they occur, in proportion to their responsibility for total excess emissions. This would mean that "undershoot" countries – those that still remain within their fair share of the planetary boundary – would receive reparations for the suffering they endure. Climate negotiators from the Global South have long called for a system to deal with loss and damage, while the leaders of rich countries have repeatedly refused. The politics of this question are clearly fraught, but the good news is that there is no technical barrier to climate reparations because the governments of the main overshooting countries have the power to issue hard currencies, like the dollar and the euro. Transfers could be made at the stroke of a keyboard. This is not to say that we don't need all hands on deck when it comes to climate mitigation. We do. All countries must decarbonise as quickly as they can manage. The results I have described here simply describe responsibility for excess emissions and climate damages. As a guide for the future, the only obvious implication is that the overshooting countries have a clear moral responsibility to end their emissions faster than the global average rate – a principle that is indicated in the Paris Agreement as "common but differentiated responsibility" – as well as to assist other countries to decarbonise through technology transfers and other forms of support. As climate damages continue to worsen, the question of responsibility will only heat up. We need to have a clear-eyed view of this problem – one rooted in the principles of atmospheric commons and climate justice.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

## New consumer protection law in Saudi Arabia

Dimah Talal Al-Sharif

The law also guarantees several other rights to consumers, including maintaining their privacy and protecting their personal data, and providing appropriate and effective means for settling consumer...

THE culture of consumer protection is fairly prevalent in Saudi Arabia, as the Kingdom works to consolidate consumer protection concepts through trading controls and regulations. On the other hand, civil society institutions also support this concept through their awareness campaigns. Recently, a draft of the consumer protection law was issued, covering both the concept of consumer rights and the concept of operator's rights. The law will ensure a successful experience for both parties, thus positively impacting the economy in the Kingdom. This draft law aims to achieve a fair balance in rights and duties between the economic operator and consumers, protecting consumers from harmful, defective or unsafe products and services, disseminating and promoting a culture of consumer rights. It also educates consumers about their rights and duties and encourages a sustainable consumption culture.

This law guarantees several rights to consumers. In particular, consumers have the right to obtain their basic needed products and services, and be protected from risks to their life, health and safety, as well having the correct information necessary to make decisions about selecting a product or service according to their needs.

The law also guarantees several other rights to consumers, including maintaining their privacy and protecting their personal data, and providing appropriate and effective means for settling consumer disputes. This is in addition to providing for the filing of lawsuits when consumers' rights are violated, damaged or restricted with quick and easy procedures, and obtaining fair compensation for damages due to their purchase, acquisition or use of a product or a service. Because information is a key element in determining consumers' decisions, the law stipulates that information provided to the consumer must be clear, accurate, sufficient and not misleading. Such information provided to the consumer shall also be written on advertisements, packaging, labels, warnings, instructions for use, or any other means appropriate to their content. In addition, the law prohibits unfair commercial practices that include advertising products or services that are not available and cannot be provided, or claiming that a product or service will be available for a limited period and under certain conditions, or a limited quantity, without sufficient stock to meet the expected demand. The law also prohibits:

- Reducing the product's life cycle or negatively

affecting its efficiency after a certain period of time has passed to increase its consumption without justification, publishing or exploiting editorial material in any media to promote a product or service without clearly and legibly indicating that this material is for advertising, using improper behavior or abusive language in such ads.

- Taking advantage of the weakness or ignorance of consumers or any condition or circumstance that affects the validity of their assessment in order to influence their decision about the product or the service.

- Threatening to take measures that may not be taken legally.

- Imposing burdensome or unjustified conditions or restrictions on consumers' desire to exercise their right, using the phrase: "The sold goods are not returned or exchanged" or any similar formula, at the headquarters of the operator or on its documents, papers or advertisements.

- Obtaining and saving personal consumer data or using it in any form without obtaining consent.

- Make offers directly to the consumer by telephone, electronic means, mail, websites, applications or other means of remote communication unless required by a contractual obligation or the consumer has expressly agreed to this.

- Providing false comments or opinions or misrepresenting consumers' comments and opinions to promote a product or a service, or assigning someone else to do so.

Our next article will discuss the controls of advertisements, competitions, and discounts that are of great interest to the consumer and govern many of their shopping habits.

– Arab News

## Briefs

## SC seeks to wrap up case today

FROM PAGE 01

"We first want to wrap up the case on what happened in the NA on April 3," the CJP remarked. However, Tarar argued, "Punjab Assembly's matter is the extension of Islamabad's case." At this, the chief justice said that "negative statements" are being issued against the court and it is being said that the court is delaying the matter. "We have to decide after listening to everyone's stance. [...] will look into Punjab assembly's matter in the end," CJP Bandial said that the court will ask the Punjab advocate-general under which law the Assembly session was adjourned. Meanwhile, PTT's counsel Babar Awan resumed his arguments, saying that he wants to put some points before the court. "I believe that no point will be disregarded in this case." Awan and counsels representing other respondents - PPP, PML-N, Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), Sindh High Court Bar, Attorney General of Pakistan and Advocate General of Punjab - had presented their arguments before the court in Tuesday's hearing as well.

## Propose dates for...

FROM PAGE 01

not later than ninety days from the date of dissolution of the National Assembly for holding general elections, the President House said in a statement. "In order to carry out the mandate of the Constitution of announcing the date of general elections, consultation with the Election Commission is required under Section 57(1) of the Elections Act, 2017," the letter said. The opposition have cried foul over the National Assembly deputy speaker's ruling and were refusing to cooperate with forming an interim government to oversee any vote, but on Wednesday Alvi upped the ante.

## US sanctions Putin's...

FROM PAGE 01

Energy transactions are blocked from these sanctions, the official said. The United States is also sanctioning Russian President Vladimir Putin's adult daughters, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's wife and daughter, and members of Russia's security council, the official said. Americans are banned from investing in Russia, the official said, including through venture capital or mergers. The U.S. is "dramatically escalating" the financial shock on Russia by cutting off that country's largest banks, the official said. Russians may be forced back into Soviet-style living standards from the 1980s, the official said. The U.S. Justice Department on Wednesday also announced new enforcement actions to disrupt and prosecute criminal Russian activity. Grim images emerging from the Ukrainian city of Bucha include a mass grave and bodies of people shot at close range, prompting calls for tougher action against Moscow and an international investigation.

## Russian forces...

FROM PAGE 01

Russia's invasion have gained new impetus this week after dead civilians shot at close range were found in the town of Bucha after it was retaken from Russian forces. "When we are hearing new rhetoric about sanctions... I can't tolerate anything that Russian troops have done," Zelenskij told Irish lawmakers by videolink. On Wednesday, to the south, a siege of the southern port of Mariupol - under bombardment through most of the invasion that began on Feb. 24 - continued, trapping tens of thousands of residents without food, water or power. "The humanitarian situation in the city is worsening," British military intelligence said on Wednesday, while Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said people trying to flee would have to use their own vehicles.

## EU toughening sanctions to keep maximum pressure

New package includes ban on coal imports, measures on oil, even gas to be needed sooner or later, says EU Council president

DNA

BRUSSELS: The EU will have to introduce measures against imports of Russian oil and even gas at some point to keep maximum pressure on the Kremlin, said the EU Council president on Wednesday. "We must do everything to make these atrocities stop. We are toughening our sanctions to keep maximum pressure on the Kremlin," said EU Council President Charles Michel told the EU Parliament. "The new package includes a ban on coal imports. I think that meas-

ures on oil and even gas will also be needed sooner or later," Michel added. He said Russia committed crimes against humanity in the Ukrainian city of Bucha. "We express our outrage at crimes against humanity, against innocent civilians in Bucha and many other cities. Yet more proof that Russian brutality against the people of Ukraine has no limits," he said, adding that there is more proof of "war crimes" and "executions." "This is not a special operation. These are war crimes and we, the EU, will not turn our backs. We look reality straight in the

## Slovenia declares 33 Russian diplomats persona non grata

SARAJEVO: Slovenia on Tuesday declared 33 Russian diplomats persona non grata as part of solidarity with Ukraine amid the Russia-Ukraine war. The Slovenian Foreign Ministry in a statement said the decision to expel Russian diplomats aims to act "in harmony" with other EU countries. The statement further noted that Russian diplomats were given 10 days to leave Slovenia. Slovenia joined several European countries, including France, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark, and Sweden, which have expelled Russian diplomats in recent days. The Russia-Ukraine war, which started on Feb. 24, has drawn international outrage, with the EU, US, and UK, among others, implementing tough sanctions on Moscow. - Agencies

eye," he added. Underlining that there will be "severe consequences for all those responsible", he said they will do anything to bring the perpetrators to international justice. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Moscow are facing even more vehement criticism from the international community after Ukraine accused Russian forces of committing "genocide" and "war crimes" in Bucha, a town near the capital Kyiv. Russia has rejected the allegations as a "fake news attack," arguing that images of dead bodies and footage of slain civilians that have

drawn global outrage were staged after Russian forces withdrew from the city. The Russia-Ukraine war, which started on Feb. 24, has drawn international outrage, with the EU, US, and Britain, among others, implementing tough financial sanctions on Moscow. At least 1,480 civilians have been killed in Ukraine and 2,195 injured, according to UN estimates, with the true figure feared to be far higher. More than 4.24 million Ukrainians have fled to other countries, with millions more internally displaced, according to the UN refugee agency.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari along with other party officials holding a press conference. - DNA

## Liverpool in sight of semis after beating Benfica

LISBON: Liverpool took charge of their Champions League quarter-final against Benfica on Tuesday as Sadio Mane, Ibrahima Konate and Luis Diaz gave them a 3-1 lead after the first leg in Lisbon. Konate nodded in his first Liverpool goal from a corner before Mane tapped home to put the visitors in command at the Estadio da Luz. Benfica made a game of it early in the second half when a Konate error allowed the lively Darwin Nunez to pull one back, but Diaz, who was superb all night, added a third to put Liverpool in sight of the semis. "They fought for their lives. We opened the door a little bit for them," said Jurgen Klopp. "We scored a third one and I think everyone agrees we could and should have scored more." Liverpool will be confident of finishing the job at Anfield next week, with Klopp comfortable enough to take off Mohamed Salah, Mane and Thiago Alcantara after an hour. Salah, in particular, was surely being preserved for Sunday, when Liverpool face Manchester City in what could prove to be the decisive match in the Premier League's neck-and-neck title race. The only disappointment was that Salah was unable to get on the scoresheet, with the Egyptian missing a handful of chances. "Every player in that situation wants to score and it's clear Mo wants to score as well," said Klopp. "It's a tough period, the boys came back from Africa and that's really not easy. Massive pressure. They need some time to settle, everything will be fine." Benfica are dotted between a Liverpool-City league and cup double-header, with the FA Cup semi-final at Wembley coming after the second leg next week, before Klopp's team continue a crunch period with league games against Manchester United and local rivals Everton. Liverpool's convincing victory may offer Klopp the luxury of rotating players again for the return leg next week. Klopp has been downplaying suggestions Liverpool could yet win an historic quadruple this term. "We are not favourites in one of the competitions we are in, but who cares? We will give it a try," he said in a press conference on Monday. But this contest demonstrated the gulf between the Premier League's heavyweights and some of the old, European elite. Despite a 20-minute surge in the second half, Benfica were clearly second best. They came into the tie dreaming of inflicting another upset, having already seen off Barcelona in the group stage and Ajax in the last 16, and they began with the intent of under-dogs, as Alex Grimaldo stirred the crowd with a thumping, sliding challenge. - Agencies

## Under pressure, Sri Lanka president revokes emergency

DNA

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has revoked a days-old state of emergency after huge public protests demanded he resign over the country's worst economic crisis in memory. The decree issued on Tuesday night said he revoked emergency orders giving him sweeping authority to act in the interests of public security and preserving public order. Rajapaksa had declared the emergency last week after crowds of protesters demonstrated near his home in the capital Colombo.

The protests began over shortages of essentials such as cooking gas, petrol, electricity and milk powder. They have spread to every part of the Indian Ocean island nation and now the demonstrators are demanding the resignation of Rajapaksa and his government. Rajapaksa has resisted the calls even after ruling party lawmakers said an interim government should replace him, and failing to do so would make them responsible for violence. A minister told parliament on Wednesday that Rajapaksa will not resign. "May I remind you that 6.9

million people voted for the president," Chief Government Whip and Highways Minister Johnston Fernando said in response to opposition criticism. "As a government, we are clearly saying the president will not resign under any circumstances. We will face this." TV and social media images from Monday showed protesters stormed into the offices and houses of ruling party lawmakers and vandalised some premises. On Tuesday, lawmakers at the first new parliament session since the protests flared asked the speaker to ensure their safety. The president and his old-

er brother, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, continue to hold power in Sri Lanka, despite their politically powerful family being the focus of public ire. The cabinet resigned on Sunday night, and Rajapaksa invited all parties to join a unity government. But the main opposition party rejected the proposal. On Tuesday, nearly 40 governing coalition lawmakers said they would no longer vote according to coalition instructions, significantly weakening the government. Sri Lanka has huge debts and dwindling foreign reserves, leaving it unable to pay for imported goods.



## UK's hijab-wearing Queen's Counsel Sultana Tafadar

There are currently just two hijab-wearing Queen's Counsels in Britain: Shaheed Fatima, a public law barrister, who was appointed in 2016, and criminal barrister Tafadar, who was appointed on March 21 this year

WEB DESK

LONDON: Sultana Tafadar, the UK's first hijab-wearing criminal barrister, who also became the first hijab-wearer from the Criminal Bar to be appointed Queen's Counsel, aims to set an example for women on pursuing their dreams and reaching goals. Tafadar, who reached the highest mark of excellence a lawyer can hold in the UK, shared her success story with Anadolu Agency. As a human rights, international law and criminal justice barrister specializing in counterterrorism and national security cases, Tafadar is the middle daughter of immigrants who moved to the UK from Bangladesh. There are currently just two hijab-wearing Queen's Counsels in Britain: Shaheed Fatima, a public law barrister, who was appointed in 2016, and criminal barrister Tafadar, who was appointed on March 21 this year.

"Undoubtedly, most of us face challenges at work. Women tend to face certain challenges, women from minority backgrounds face challenges, and women who are visibly Muslim or wearing a hijab tend to face certain challenges," Tafadar said. Tafadar, who was called to the Criminal Bar in 2005, was born and raised in Bedfordshire, where she attended a local state school. Less than 2% of lawyers in Britain become Queen's Counsel, most practicing as barristers or advocates in Scotland. Meanwhile, becoming a Queen's Counsel is a tough process in the UK since the lawyers usually need to have at least 15 years of experience for the application. They make an application to be considered, supplying 12 key cases in the last three years, with 12 judges, 12 barristers and 12 solicitors as referees. There are 1,928 Queen's Counsels in Britain - less than 2% of the entire legal profession. "It wasn't an easy journey.



criminal bar wearing the hijab. "I used to go to court. And a lot of the time, the courts would go very silent, and they weren't quite sure who I was and what I was doing there. They'd ask if I was the defendant. Most of the time, they'd ask if I was the interpreter," she said. "And so you have those hurdles to overcome, where people make assumptions about who you are. They make assumptions about your ability, and so it does take time to break those assumptions down. So those are the types of challenges I've faced throughout my career, Tafadar added. Speaking on France's ban last month on advocates wearing the hijab, Tafadar said "the irony is just quite sad." On March 2, France's highest court upheld a ban on advocates wearing the hijab and other religious symbols in courtrooms in Lille, northern France. The landmark ruling sets a precedent for the rest of the country. Tafadar recalled that by being ap-

pointed Queen's Counsel, "which is effectively saying I'm in the top 2% of the legal profession," she has done a "very good job" throughout her career. "I wore my hijab at my appointment to this position. Other lawyers wear wigs, but I am exempt from wearing them. And it's sad because just across the (English) Channel, you have a whole different scenario where lawyers aren't allowed to go to court wearing the hijab, women aren't allowed to realize their capacity and their full potential," she said. "They aren't allowed to. And it's not just in court, but in all spheres of life. They're not allowed to engage in sports, they're not allowed to engage in public life in professions. And this really amounts to discriminatory practices. This discrimination on the basis of gender is discrimination on the basis of race is discrimination on the basis of religion. And this is also a denial of the freedom of expression," she noted. - Source: Anadolu Agency

## Opp. symbolic session elects Hamza as new CM

FROM PAGE 01

decided to support the Opposition's candidate for the chief minister's office. The chief minister's office had fallen vacant after PTT's Usman Buzdar resigned following PM Imran Khan's decision to nominate PML-Q's Pervaiz Elahi as the new CM. Weeping after witnessing the ceremony, Maryam told Geo News that her tears were the tears of victory, as she prayed for her deceased mother, Kulsoom Nawaz, who died at a hospital in London. Meanwhile, Hamza, while talking to journalists, said it was unfortunate that the assembly session could not take place today, as he slammed Speaker Pervaiz Elahi for barring MPs and media personnel from entering the assembly's building. "These people are playing with the Constitution [...] they cannot understand what is happening with them in Punjab and the Centre," Hamza told journalists, who are expected to have a tough competition with Elahi for the top slot. The PML-N leader slammed the PTI government for derailing the economy and worsening the crisis. "The stock market is bullish, while the dollar has reached a historic high." Moving on, the Opposition Leader in the Punjab Assembly slammed the PTI-led government for imprisoning Ajeem, Tareen, Maryam, and other Opposition leaders for "revenge".

## Shehbaz holds PM...

FROM PAGE 01

the country into a permanent economic crisis with experts predicting USD price shoot up to more than Rs200. He stated that the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry has warned that 4.3 billion deficit in the foreign exchange reserve. The PML-N leader received flak for his "beggars can not be chooser" statement, saying no nation can be free until it achieves financial autonomy in an interview with a private news channel. He added that unfortunately, Pakistan is not economically independent, our country is surviving on loans from foreign agencies. He added that Prime Minister used to claim that he would "commit suicide" rather than go to the IMF, then why did not he do so when his government asked the IMF to bail them out of the financial crisis.

## NA Speaker writes letter to Imran...

FROM PAGE 01

the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the outgoing National Assembly do not agree on any person to be appointed as the caretaker Prime Minister, within three days of the dissolution of the National Assembly, they shall forward two nominees each to a Committee to be immediately constituted by the Speaker of the National Assembly, comprising eight members of the outgoing National Assembly, or the Senate, or both, having equal representation from the Treasury and the Opposition, to be nominated by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition respectively.

## All parties should stay united...

FROM PAGE 01

national development and stability," Zhao Lijian said in response to a question about current political situation in Pakistan after Prime Minister Imran Khan blocked opposition parties no-confidence move against him. He said China always followed the principle of non interference in other countries domestic affairs. Terming China and Pakistan as all weather strategic cooperative partners, he said. "History has proven once again that no matter how the international landscape may evolve, how our respective domestic situation may change, China and Pakistan relations will always stand unbreakable and rock firm." "We believe that the China-Pakistan overall cooperation and the CPEC construction will not be affected by the political situation in Pakistan," he added.

## Briefs

## Italy takes to battlements to save its dying hamlets

Calascio, Italy: The streets are silent and cats hunt in abandoned houses, but the view from the battlements of Calascio's castle is spectacular – good enough perhaps to save this dying Italian hamlet. Local officials have put restoring the ruins and attracting tourists at the heart of their bid to revive the village, which has won 20 million euros (\$22 million) in EU post-pandemic funds. Surrounded by Abruzzo's snowcapped peaks, Calascio is one of 21 dying or deserted villages awarded an equal share of a 420-million-euro pot by the Italian government. Critics question how equipped the tiny councils are to spend such vast sums of money – which translates to almost 154,000 euros per person in Calascio.

The nationwide project has soured relations in several regions between winning villages and those that have lost out, and prompted warnings over potential fraud and waste. But Calascio's mayor Paolo Baldi, a former mountain guide originally from Rome, is undaunted.

"We want to bring the hamlet back to life," said Baldi, who did up one of its ruined houses in 1993 and moved in with his young family. Once a bustling and wealthy wool centre, Calascio shrank from over 2,000 residents at the start of the 1900s to just 130 now, almost all of them elderly. In the winter months, only 70 or so people remain. Just three children have been born here in 12 years. It has no grocer's shops, school or doctor's surgery. – APP

## Ex Amnesty India chief stopped from leaving country

NEW DELHI: Amnesty International's former India chief said Wednesday he was stopped from flying to the United States because of government legal action against the human rights watchdog. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has long been accused of trying to silence critics, and activists say they have been targeted for harassment since he took office in 2014.

Aakar Patel said he was stopped from boarding his flight to the United States at the airport in the southern city of Bangalore because he was on an "exit control list". He wrote on Twitter that he was then contacted by the country's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and told he was prevented from leaving "because of the case Modi govt has filed against Amnesty International India". Amnesty has been a vocal critic of the Modi government's treatment of minorities and alleged abuses by Indian security forces in the disputed territory of Kashmir. – APP

## Azerbaijani-Pakistani relations are at the highest level: Envoy

Ambassador Bilal Hayee visits Binagadi Youth House

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Bilal Hayee visited Binagadi Youth House and attended an event as a guest of honor. The event was attended by Elnur Mammadov, Deputy Head of the Department of Socio-Political and Humanitarian Affairs of the Binagadi District Executive Power, Mr. Namig Tarverdiyev, Head of the Binagadi District Youth and Sports Department, Gunel Hasanova, Director of the Binagadi Youth House and representatives of youth. After greeting the Ambassador, Farah Guliyeva, Project Manager of Binagadi Youth House, addressed questions reflecting the friendly relations between our two countries. In his remarks, Ambassa-

dor Bilal Hayee said that today the Azerbaijani-Pakistani relations are at the highest stage of development. After Azerbaijan gained its independence, political relations with Pakistan, built on solid foundations, have been constantly developed and raised to the level of today's strategic alliance. The ambassador noted that just as Pakistan supports Azerbaijan in resolving the Karabakh issue in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions, Azerbaijan, in turn, always supports Islamabad's position on the Kashmir dispute. At the end of the event, a question/answer session was also held with the youth attendees. The event was moderated by the Project Manager Ms. Farah Guliyeva.



## PPP KSA marks death anniversary of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto



DNA

JEDDAH: Pakistan People's party (PPP) and Peoples Youth Organization (PYO) Saudi Arabia jointly organized a function to commemorate the 43rd death anniversary of former Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto today (Monday) at VIP hall of Mehran hotel in Jeddah. Tasawar Hussain Choudhary president PPP Saudi Arab presided over the gathering. Acting president PYO Sardar Waqas Inayat was chief guest while Choudhary Azher Warraich chairman Pakistan Muslim League (PML-Q) and Choudhary Akram Gujjar Chairman Pakistan Muslim League PML-N were Guest of honor.

Proceeding started with the recitation of few verses from Holy Qur'an by Dr. Abdul Rehman Mussarat Khalil. Naat presented by journalist Hafiz Irfan Khatana. Famous poet of Jeddah Zamurad Khan Saifi paid rich tribute in his poem to Shaheed Bhutto. Speakers included senior journalist Syed Mussarat Khalil, Sardar Kaleem Khan president PYO-KSA, Ch. Azher Warraich, Jawaid Malik Hussain Awan, vice president PPP-KSA, chairman Jahangir Khan president, Pak Media Journalist Forum (PMJF), Amir Mohammed Khan, Ch. Mohammed Akram, praised and highlighted the democratic struggle of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto in their speeches. They said "PPP is Pakistan's biggest political party founded by the visionary of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto on Nov. 30, 1967, during a period of immense darkness, to counter a dictatorship that was sucking the lifeblood of our beloved homeland. While delivering presidential address Tasawar Hussain Choudhary thanked all the guests, leaders from Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), PML-Q, journalists and other representatives from cultural, social, welfare and literally forums who gathered to commemorate 43rd death anniversary of the former Prime Minister and founder chairman of PPP Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. He said I believe Z. A. Bhutto was pioneer of "absolutely not" for Sovereignty of the nation and country.



BRUSSELS: A meeting was held between President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and President of the European Council Charles Michel. – DNA

## Lebanon faces bread crisis amid flour shortage

BEIRUT: Lebanon's bakery union on Wednesday warned of a bread crisis in the Arab country as several wheat mills halted operation due to lack of funding. In a statement, the Bakeries Syndicate said bread bakeries face a shortage of wheat flour in several Lebanese areas. "A number of bakeries have stopped making bread, while others have limited quantities of wheat flour that are sufficient for only one day," it added.

The union blamed Lebanon's Central Bank for the crisis. "Banque du Liban is delaying the payment of wheat shipments for unknown reasons," he alleged. There was no comment from the Central Bank on the claim. Lebanon needs around 40,000-50,000 tons of wheat to meet the local market needs. – APP

## Gwadar port commemorating Chinese martyrs

ISLAMABAD: In connection with the global commemoration of Chinese martyrs, Gwadar Port solemnly marked the 18th anniversary of Chinese nationals who lost their lives in a deadly terrorist attack in Gwadar.

Chinese officials working in Gwadar paid rich tributes to the compatriots who sacrificed their lives in the construction of Gwadar port. According to Gwadar Pro, Deputy General Manager Gwadar Free Zone Company, Mr. Jia Yong Hui, along with Chief Security Officer Xu Shaolong, Manager Administration Zou Yaodong, and other senior officials of COPHC and CBC visited the monument to pay homage to the gallant compatriots for laying their lives in constructing Gwadar Port. COPHC chairman in his tweet paid homage to the Chinese martyrs of Gwadar Port. Chi-

nese consul general Karachi Li Bijian in his twitter account uploaded Chinese President Xi's remarks which latter mentioned "for those who offered their precious lives for the country, the Chinese people and peace, we will forever remember their sacrifice and contribution no matter how time changes."

On April 5, 2004, when a van carrying 12 Chinese engineers and 2 Pakistani workers was passing through marine drive, it suffered a terror attack that led to the martyrdom of three Chinese nationals and nine injured. Gwadar tribute to Chinese martyrs is a part of the Qingming Festival, a traditional occasion for the Chinese to honor their ancestors, people in the country and overseas pay tributes to their family ancestors as well as to the country's martyrs.

## Saudi Cabinet welcomes UN efforts in Yemeni truce

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia said it values the UN's efforts in the truce in Yemen.

The Cabinet, meeting on Tuesday evening, expressed hope the cessation of military actions would contribute to a political solution in the war-ravaged country.

Yemenis have been invited for a national dialogue through a Gulf Cooperation Council initiative to find a solution to the seven-year war. The Iran-backed Houthi group has refused to attend the talks in Riyadh.

The Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen announced last Wednesday it would stop all military operations in Yemen. The Houthis announced a unilateral ceasefire on March 26.

The two-month truce has been welcomed by the international community.

The UAE it supports all efforts made by the UN envoy to enhance prospects for peace and stability in Yemen and the region.

Bahrain praised the response of the leadership of the coalition and said it hopes that it will constitute an important step as an opportunity to stop the war in Yemen. – APP

## Israel's PM Bennett loses majority

JERUSALEM: A key member of Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's Yamina party said Wednesday she was quitting his coalition government, in a surprise move that leaves him without a parliamentary majority. Idit Silman's announcement left Bennett's coalition, an alliance of parties ranging from the Jewish right and Israeli doves to an Arab Muslim party, with 60 seats – the same as the opposition. "I tried the path of unity. I worked a lot for this coalition," Silman, a religious conservative who served as coalition chairperson, said in a statement. – APP

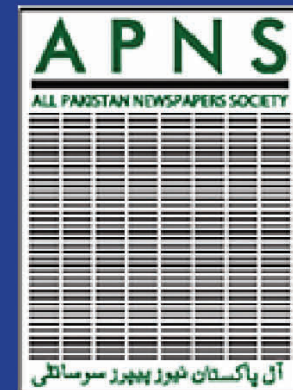
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## Roles of females in sales of beauty sector of Pakistan

RAJA MOHSIN &amp; NOUMAN IJAZ

In recent years beauty salons have become very profitable businesses for women. According to Pakistan today, Lahore is the most expensive hub regarding services of a salon or makeup artist. High end saloons charges start from RS 75,000 and the amount doubles in case of makeup artists for example Ather Shehzad charging RS 135,000 for a bridal makeup. During special occasions customers from the upper class spend between Rs 1500 to 4000 on average for a normal haircut or blow dry at a properly furnished saloon. In the middle segment more and more women from the lower and middle income families are increasingly utilizing these services resulting in the growth

of small and medium size beauty parlors that are more affordable to the masses. Due to the increasing demand in the wedding season, many women have been given the opportunities to become 'beauticians' who are striving to become 'artists' in the near future. One very well known beautician is Noreen who is a single mother of two running a small beauty parlor for the past 14 years providing services to lower income families. Noreen is an expert in her very field providing make up and hairdo related services at affordable prices. Noreen's home based parlor provided her with sufficient investment to open a new branch in Gulistan-e-Jauhar which is considered a growing market for the parlor businesses. Noreen earns around 200,000 to 300,000 during the profitable seasons

which occur usually after Eid-ul-Fitr. Many aspiring beauticians are taking the alternatives routes to try to make a name for themselves in the industry. These new young beauticians participate in different courses at multiple beauty institutions, along with well known makeup artists providing them with proper guidance to setup home-based makeup studios. A well known example is of Nida Jamal, a young makeup enthusiast who decided to make her passion a proper profession by opening a small makeup studio in her very home, this has helped her to provide affordable services to clients from all over Karachi. Nida Jamal took a variety of courses which include makeup courses from Kanwa Batool, hairdo course from Femina institute, another makeup course from Natasha Salon and Musarat

Misbah at Depilex salon. Nida Jamal strives to make a career in the industry and she earns on average 6,000 to 7,000 on a daily basis during her peak seasons. These ventures have proved to be very successful for many artists as consumers are attracted by the fact that these artists have substantial knowledge and expertise of well known salons and offer services at reasonably justified price points in comparison to the high end beauty salons. Since the beauty industry provides work opportunities to women who are willing to work with limited resources, haji Muhammad Shafiq (President all Pakistan hairdressers and beauticians federation- a private association of beauticians in Lahore) said there association aims to expand the industry.

**Briefs**

**Sri Lanka: timeline of a crisis**

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka has been plunged into political turmoil, with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa under pressure to resign as protests escalate over an economic crisis. The island nation of 22 million people is experiencing acute shortages of food, fuel and other essentials - along with record inflation and crippling power cuts - which have inflicted widespread misery in the most painful downturn since independence from Britain in 1948.

The South Asian country, which emerged from a devastating civil war in 2009 only to be rocked by Islamist bombings in 2019, has also been hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, which torpedoed its vital tourism sector. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has dealt a new blow to the tourism industry as the two European countries represented Sri Lanka's first and third biggest sources of visitors in January. - Agencies

**Man dies after ramming car into Russian embassy**

BUCHAREST: A man died after ramming his car into the gates of the Russian embassy in Romania on Wednesday and setting himself on fire inside the vehicle, police said.

"The car crashed into the gate and right after the person inside the vehicle lit a device and that's how the fire inside the car started," prosecutor Bogdan Staicu told reporters. "Inside the car, containers with inflammable substances were found," Staicu added. Amateur footage posted on social media showed a vehicle in flames and crashed into the gates of the diplomatic mission in the early hours of Wednesday. "So far we can't say that this act is tied to something else other than the driver's personal circumstances," Staicu said. Romanian media said the driver headed an NGO for fathers' rights and was on Tuesday sentenced to more than 15 years in prison for molesting his underage daughter. - APP

**Japan's new vehicle sales drops for 3rd year**

TOKYO: New car sales in Japan decreased for the third straight year in fiscal 2021, down 9.5 percent compared to a year earlier, due to slowed production on shortages of semiconductors and other components amid the COVID-19 pandemic, industry bodies said Wednesday. A total of 4,215,826 vehicles were sold in fiscal 2021 which ended Thursday, according to the Japan Automobile Dealers Association and the Japan Light Motor Vehicle and Motorcycle Association. Domestic auto sales excluding mini vehicles plummeted 8.2 percent to 2,660,855 units, logging the second lowest since data became available in fiscal 1968. Toyota Motor Corp. sold 1,313,913 units, down 9.7 percent year on year. - APP

**UK's PM says Bucha killings not 'far short of genocide'**

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Wednesday the alleged massacre of Ukrainian civilians by Russian troops in the town of Bucha "doesn't look far short of genocide to me". The UK government has consistently refused to use the word "genocide" with regard to Ukraine and other conflicts, arguing that designating the worst of war crimes is up to a competent court. But Johnson told reporters: "I'm afraid when you look at what's happening in Bucha, the revelations that we are seeing from what (Vladimir) Putin has done in Ukraine doesn't look far short of genocide to me. - Agencies

**Pakistan's economic growth to moderate to 4% in FY22**

"Pak economy is recovering steadily thanks to well-coordinated fiscal and monetary responses to the pandemic," said ADB Country Director for Pakistan Yong Ye

DNA

ISLAMABAD: After a strong economic rebound in fiscal year (FY) 2021, Pakistan's economic growth is expected to moderate to 4% in FY2022 due to tighter fiscal and monetary policies before picking up again in FY2023, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said in a report on Wednesday. According to the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2022, ADB's annual flagship economic publication, Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) growth is projected to slow to 4% in FY2022 from 5.6% in FY2021 as the government applies measures

to reduce the current account deficit, raise international reserves, and cut inflation. Growth is expected to accelerate to 4.5% in FY2023 due to stronger private consumption and investment. "Pakistan's economy is recovering steadily thanks to well-coordinated fiscal and monetary responses to the pandemic," said ADB Country Director for Pakistan Yong Ye. "These led to a remarkable expansion in the industry and services sectors. It is key to continue structural reforms along with appropriate fiscal and monetary policies to contain rising inflation and external imbalances. Comprehensive reforms in tax policy and administration are also critical to boost-

ing revenues in order to fund essential public services. ADB is fully committed to supporting Pakistan's sustainable development." In FY2022, industrial growth is forecast to decelerate, reflecting fiscal and monetary tightening together with a significant depreciation of the local currency, and upward adjustments to domestic oil and electricity prices. Agriculture is expected to continue leading impetus to GDP growth supported by the government's package of subsidized inputs and increased support prices of wheat and sugarcane. Inflation declined to 8.9% in FY2021 but is expected to pick up in FY2022 to around 11% due to higher international energy

prices, significant currency depreciation, and elevated global food prices from supply disruptions. As a net importer of oil and gas, Pakistan will continue experiencing strong inflationary pressures for the remainder of FY2022 from the jump in global fuel prices resulting from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Inflationary pressures are likely to be less pronounced in FY2023, with inflation forecast to drop to 8.5% as fiscal consolidation progresses and oil and commodity prices stabilize. The ADB said it was committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Mustafa Yurdakul and Mrs Zlatomira Yurdakul participated in the food donation ceremony organized by Tika Islamabad Coordination Office Pakistan Bait ul Mal to families in need. Ambassador Mustafa Yurdakul and Madam Zlatomira Yurdakul graced the food distribution ceremony which was held by the cooperation of Tika Islamabad Office and Pakistan Bait ul Mal with their presence. - DNA

**SC will decide on NA deputy speaker's ruling: Qureshi**

ISLAMABAD: Former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said on Wednesday that the Supreme Court (SC) has to decide about the ruling of the deputy speaker National Assembly. While talking to the media on Wednesday, PTI leader Shah Mahmood said that whether the ruling is correct or not it is a separate debate and the issue is being heard by the Apex court of the country. The former FM said that the opposition is saying that the constitution has been violated, PTI is aware of the sanctity of the constitution. Respect for the constitution was necessary, is and will remain, he added.

Qureshi said that it is the right of the opposition to present a no-confidence motion and they presented it. The matter was fixed for the voting in the National Assembly, but the deputy speaker rejected the no-confidence motion when the issue of 'foreign conspiracy' came to light. The PTI leader clarified that a no-confidence motion will not be denied, it will be acted upon. He said that the deputy speaker had not rejected the motion without any solid reason, before the constitutional responsibility, in the interest of national security these issues have to be taken to the logical end, the court can form a Judicial Commission for investigation. - DNA

**PTA urges YouTube to unblock Dr Israr's channel**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) has called upon YouTube to review its decision to block a TV channel run by the late Dr Israr Ahmed's foundation over charges of hate speech.

"This unilateral shutdown of Dr Israr Ahmed's channel, a prominent Muslim scholar, raises questions about the arbitrary limits of online expression," the PTA said in its appeal to YouTube on Tuesday.

Sources in the PTA said the channel concerned used to broadcast videos of Dr Israr Ahmed that tried to shed light on the socio-economic order envisaged by the Holy Quran. The PTA pleaded that such videos were only aimed at "educating the viewers".

YouTube suspended the channel after Jewish groups complained that its programmes carried contents which incited hate against them. Dr Israr's channel had almost three million subscribers and his lectures were admired by a large number of people living in the West. The channel, operated by the son of Dr Israr Ahmed, shows recordings of the late scholar's old speeches. - Agencies

**India's noncompliance with UN resolutions threaten peace**

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan told the United Nations Disarmament Commission Tuesday that India's violations of UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir posed a threat to regional and international peace, and urged the world community to call out its willful defiance of international legality. "Failure to do so entails risks to regional peace and security in a nuclearised South Asia and beyond," Ambassador Munir Akram warned in an address to the Commission, which operates under the UN General Assembly and deals primarily with

issues relating to disarmament. The Pakistani envoy also drew the Commission's attention to India's "accidental" launching of a supersonic nuclear-capable missile into Pakistan's territory on March 9, saying it reveals serious gaps in that country's ability to manage its strategic assets. Continuing his remarks about the threat to South Asia peace, he said it stems from India's brutal suppression of the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir; its demonstrated aggressive posture towards Pakistan; its unbridled accumulation of conventional and strate-

**US announces sale of missile defence to Taiwan**

WASHINGTON: The US has announced it approved the sale of up to \$95 million worth of training and equipment to support Taiwan's Patriot missile defence system, something Taipei said would help protect the island from any invasion by China. "The proposed sale will help to sustain (Taiwan's) missile density and ensure readiness for air operations," the Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in a statement on Tuesday. It added Taiwan will use the proposed training and equipment as a "deterrent to regional threats and

to strengthen homeland defense." Taiwan's foreign ministry welcomed the arms deal - the third approved under US President Joe Biden - saying it would help protect against Beijing's "continuing military expansion and provocation." "In the face of China's continuing military expansion and provocation, Taiwan must fully demonstrate its strong determination to defend itself," it said in a statement. Taiwan's defense ministry said the planned deal is expected to take effect in one month. The latest arms purchase comes as Taiwan closely watches the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, as it also lives under the constant threat of an invasion by a giant neighbour. China regards Taiwan as its territory and has vowed repeatedly to seize it one day, by force if necessary. Beijing has dramatically ramped up its sabre rattling in recent years, sending 969 Chinese warplanes into Taiwan's air defence zone in 2021, according to a database compiled by AFP news agency - more than double the roughly 380 in 2020. - Agencies

**Pope decries 'horrendous cruelties' in Ukraine**

WEB DESK

ROME: Pope Francis on Wednesday condemned the "horrendous cruelties" in war-torn Ukraine. "Ever more horrendous cruelties [are occurring], even against civilians, women, and helpless children. They are victims whose innocent blood cries out to heaven and implores", Francis said during his weekly audience at the Vatican. "May this war cease! May weapons

fall silent. Stop sowing death and destruction," he added. During the audience, Francis showed a Ukrainian flag which he said he received on Tuesday from Bucha. He said it "came from war, from that martyred city of Bucha." The Vatican has offered itself as a mediator in the war between Russia and Ukraine, and Francis over the weekend said he was considering a Ukrainian invitation to go to Kyiv, "but I don't know if it can be done."

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Moscow have been facing vehement criticism from the international community after Ukraine accused Russian forces of committing "genocide" and "war crimes" in Bucha, a town near the capital Kyiv. Russia has rejected the allegations as a "fake news attack," arguing that images of dead bodies and footage of slain civilians that have drawn global outrage were staged after Russian forces withdrew from the city.

**Al Qaeda leader releases video message**

MONITORING DESK

CAIRO: A rare video has appeared of Al Qaeda's leader praising an Indian Muslim woman who in February defied a ban on wearing hijab, revealing the first proof in months that he is still alive. Rumours of the death of Ayman al Zawahiri have persistently circulated, but in a video released on Tuesday and translated by the SITE Intelligence Group, the reclusive Al Qaeda chief praises Muskan Khan, who defied a ban on the wearing of the hijab in schools in India's southwestern state of Karnataka. She shouted "God Is Great" as Hindu radical students jeered at her over the Islamic headscarf. In March the court in India's Karnataka state upheld the ban, outraging civil activists and Muslim groups in India and elsewhere. A previous video of Zawahiri, which circulated on the anniversary last year of 9/11, did not reference the Taliban's August takeover. It did mention the January 1, 2021 attack that targeted Russian troops on the edge of the northern Syrian city of Raqqa. "He could still be dead, though if so, it would have been at some point in or after January 2021," tweeted Rita Katz, SITE's director following Zawahiri's 9/11 anniversary video. From Tuesday's video there is no clear indication of the location of Zawahiri. He is shown in a traditional white headscarf beside a poster praising "the noble woman of India." However, it raises the spectre of Al Qaeda having a presence in Afghanistan, and highlights concerns over the commitment of the ruling Taliban to fight terrorist groups and deny them space in Afghanistan.

**Russia scraps covid flight curbs for Pak, others**

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia has ditched Covid-19 flight restrictions for over 50 "friendly" countries including China, Lebanon, Peru, and Pakistan, after Moscow found itself cut off from the West over the conflict in Ukraine. "The infection rate is declining, which means it's time to expand the destinations available to our Russian airlines," Russian news agencies quoted premier Mikhail Mishustin as saying. "Now we are resuming air traffic with 52 countries, including Argentina, India, China, South Africa and other states friendly to us." Russia's state aviation agency said that the new measures covering regular and charter flights would come into force from April 9. The move comes after Western nations, including EU member states, the United States, Britain and Canada, blocked their airspace to Russian planes after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine. The Kremlin responded by shutting Russia's vast airspace to those countries.

**Hungary ready to pay for Russian gas in roubles**

BUDAPEST: Hungary said on Wednesday it was prepared to pay roubles for Russian gas, breaking ranks with the European Union which has sought a united front in opposing Moscow's demand for payment in the currency. Hungary will pay for shipments in roubles if Russia asks it to, Prime Minister Viktor Orban told a news conference on Wednesday in reply to a Reuters question. Russian President Vladimir Putin has warned Europe it risks having gas supplies cut unless it pays in roubles as he seeks retaliation over Western sanctions for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. With weeks go to before bills are due, the European Commission has said that those with contracts requiring payment in euros or dollars should stick to that. - Agencies

**Kabul mosque hit by grenade attack**

The ISKP claimed the attack on a military hospital in Kabul in November which left 19 dead

AGENCIES

KABUL: At least six people have been wounded in a grenade blast at a mosque in a densely populated area of the Afghan capital, Kabul, police said, minutes after worshippers offered midday prayers. Attacks on public targets have largely diminished since the Taliban seized power in August last year, but ISIL (ISIS) affiliates continue to operate in parts of the country. "We had finished the prayers and were heading out of the mosque when the blast occurred," worshipper Mohammed Yasin told the AFP news agency. Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadrani told AFP a grenade was thrown into the Pul-e-Khisti mosque and a suspect was arrested at the scene. The mosque is located in a densely populated area of Kabul and is surrounded by busy shops and markets.

**No strikes in Afghanistan since troops left: Pentagon**

WASHINGTON: The US troops have not carried out any over-the-horizon operation in Afghanistan since they left the country in August 2021, a senior Pentagon official said as reported by US media. Addressing the US Senate Armed Services Committee, head of US Special Operations Command Gen. Richard Clarke acknowledged that the withdrawal of American troops limited access to intelligence resources in Afghanistan. The US left Afghanistan on August 31st, 2021, after a 20-year military presence. "We have put additional forces into Indo-Pacific theater and into the European theater over the last three years. We started the rebalancing of some of the soft requirements based on the 2018 national defense strategy that identified the threats," he said. Earlier, many US officials expressed their concerns over the remerge of terrorist groups including Daesh in Afghanistan, but the Islamic Emirate denied the presence of terrorist groups in the country. "Security has been ensured all over the country. There is no terrorist group to pose threat to Afghanistan," said Inamullah Samangani, an Islamic Emirate spokesman. "The Islamic Emirate has remained committed to not allow anyone to use Afghan soil to threaten the security of the region and the world." - Agencies

No group has claimed responsibility, but the Islamic State of Khorasan Province (ISKP, ISIS-K) group has carried out recent attacks in Kabul and other cities. The ISKP claimed the attack on a military hospital in Kabul in November which left 19 dead. The group also claimed the October suicide attack on a Shia mosque in Kandahar which in at least 60 people were killed. Taliban officials insist their forces have defeated the group, but analysts say the ISKP is a key security challenge to the new rulers of Afghanistan. In February, the United States offered up to \$10m for information leading to the location or identification of Sanaulah Ghafari, the leader of ISKP, the Afghanistan affiliate of ISIL. In a separate attack on Sunday, at least one person was killed and 59 others wounded in an explosion at the country's largest money changing market, Sarai Shahzada - not far from the attacked mosque.