



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, April 21, 2022

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China need to  
be bolstered**

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**Ramiz Raja to  
be removed as  
PCB Chief**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

**Rana  
Sanaullah  
takes charge**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly Rana Sana Ullah Khan on Wednesday took charge as Minister for Interior. Upon arrival at the Interior Ministry, Rana Sana Ullah Khan was received by Interior Secretary Yousaf Naseem Khokhar and other senior officials, said a press release. Rana Sana Ullah has assumed charge of 46th interior minister and was elected member of National Assembly from NA-106 Faisalabad. Earlier, he remained member of Punjab Assembly for five times and remained provincial law and interior minister of PML-N government during 2013-2018. Rana Sana Ullah is also provincial President of PML-N from Punjab.

**Dr. Waseem  
notified as  
Senate Opp.  
leader**

**KHAYAM ABBASI**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjani has declared Senator Dr Shahzad Waseem as Leader of the Opposition in the Upper House. A notification has been issued in this regard. Earlier, PTI leader, Dr Shahzad Waseem was Leader of the House in the Senate and after being voted out of the PTI government, he will now act as Leader of the Opposition.

**Pakistan  
committed to Afghan  
peace: Hina**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabhani Khar on Wednesday said Pakistan was committed to continuing its efforts toward ensuring peace in Afghanistan and the region. She expressed these views in a meeting with Pakistan's Special Envoy to Afghanistan, Ambassador Mohammad Sadiq who called on her at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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Eleven new industrial units setting up in Rashakai SEZ  
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## PM vows to address core challenges

Chairing the maiden meeting of his cabinet, PM Shehbaz stresses upon dedication and sincere efforts

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT / APP**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday told his cabinet members to roll up their sleeves to meet the challenges of inflation, unemployment, poverty and load-shedding, for turning the desperation into an opportunity of progress and public relief. The prime minister, chairing the maiden meeting of his cabinet which took oath on Tuesday, believed that their dedicated and sincere efforts could turn the tide and make the country cope with the challenges successfully. He congratulated the cabinet members coming from different political parties of the ruling coalition and said the federal cabinet comprised seasoned politicians with vast experience and competence having huge struggle to their credit. The prime minister said the current government came into being consequent to a no-confidence motion against the former prime minister. The incumbent government is based on huge coalition which was being applauded as well as criticized. He expressed the hope that despite representing their own political parties, the coalition members would move on setting aside their personal biases with just one aim to serve the masses. He also reiterated his resolve for making untiring efforts to come up to the people's expectation. "I call this a war cabinet as we are fighting against inflation, unemployment and poverty which we inherited from the previous government."

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## Pakistan values its relationship with US: PM

**STAFF REPORT**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday underscored that Pakistan valued its long-standing relationship with the United States and wanted to further deepen bilateral cooperation based on mutual respect, trust, and equality. He highlighted that constructive engagement between the two countries could help promote peace, security and development in the region. The prime minister was talking to United States House of Representatives Ilhan Omar who called on him. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including Pakistan-U.S. bilateral relations as well as regional situation were discussed. Maintaining that the US was Pakistan's largest trading partner, the Prime Minister emphasized the need to further enhance cooperation between the two countries especially in the trade and investment fields. He lauded the efforts of Pakistani Diaspora in reinforcing the Pakistan-US ties and added that Pakistan deeply

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## Federal Govt has lost majority; claims Fawad

Fawad demanded of Prime Minister to immediately take vote of confidence



**ABID RAZA**

LAHORE: PTI leader and former information and broadcasting minister Fawad Chaudhry Wednesday said that the incumbent government has lost its majority after the death of MQM-P MNA Iqbal Muhammad Ali Khan and separation of BNP-Mengal from the alliance, ARY NEWS reported. Taking to Twitter, Fawad Chaudhry demanded of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to immediately take vote of confidence from the National Assembly. "The ruling coalition now stands at 168 in contrast to 172 votes needed for having a majority in the House," he said. On April 11, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

Continued on Page 06

## DC stops Imran Khan to appear in Lahore Jalsa

**BUREAU REPORT**

LAHORE: After receiving severe threat alerts from intelligence agencies, Lahore Deputy Commissioner has stopped former premier Imran Khan to appear physically at the PTI's Lahore rally today. According to the report, the DC Lahore office has written a letter to the PTI leadership on the matter and suggested Imran Khan address the PTI rally at Minar-e-Pakistan virtually (by video link). In the letter, it is stated that due to severe security concerns at the Minar-e-Pakistan rally, PTI Chairman Imran Khan should address this through a video link, and not go to the meeting place. It is to be noted that after Peshawar and Karachi, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is going to hold a big public meeting at Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore for which preparations are in the final stages. Yesterday, PTI Chairman Imran Khan released a video message for the Minar-e-Pakistan rally and said he invite all Pakistanis to participate in his struggle.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Dr. Christian Turner calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. – DNA

## PM Sharif meets President Arif Alvi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Newly elected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday arrived at Aiwan-e-Sadr where he held a maiden meeting with President Arif Alvi. Sources privy to the development said that the prime minister discussed the appointment of all four governors and the summary to remove Punjab Governor Omar Sarfaraz Cheema. The meeting between PM Shehbaz Sharif and President Arif Alvi continued for 20 minutes, well-informed sources said. After assuming office, PM Shehbaz Sharif removed Governor Punjab Omar Sarfaraz Cheema from his post. Governor Punjab while addressing a press conference had said that the Prime Minister was not authorized to remove him from his office. "This power rests with the President. Only he can remove me from the office," Governor Omar Sarfaraz Cheema said.

## Tariq Fatemi appointed SAPM



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government on Wednesday appointed Syed Tariq Fatemi as Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Foreign Affairs in a move that may not go down well with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP),

Continued on Page 06

## British envoy, PM discuss bilateral cooperation

The High Commissioner and the Prime Minister looked forward to working closely together

**ANSAR BHATTI**

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Christian Turner on Wednesday met Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif at PM House. Congratulating the Prime Minister on assuming office, the High Commissioner stressed the deep people-to-people ties between the two countries, in this 75th anniversary year of bilateral relations. The High Commissioner and the Prime Minister discussed the strong bilateral development relationship, with the High Commissioner noting that UK aid has enabled nearly 16m children (including 7.4 million girls) to attend school since 2011. The High Commissioner and the Prime Minister looked forward to working closely together on this and other areas of shared interest, including global challenges and strengthening trade and investment links.

## PM for exploring Pak-Bahrain ties



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday emphasized the importance of deepening bilateral economic

Continued on Page 06

## Mariupol: No surrender as deadline expires

**NEWS DESK**

MARIUPOL: A Russian ultimatum to Ukrainian troops in Mariupol to surrender or die expired on Wednesday afternoon with no mass capitulation, but the commander of a unit believed to be holding out in the besieged city said his forces could survive just days or hours. The United Nations said on Wednesday the number of refugees who have fled Ukraine since Russia invaded on Feb. 24 had exceeded five million. More than half are children. Ukraine said it had so far held off an assault by thousands of Russian troops attempting to advance in what Ukrainian officials call the Battle of the Donbas, a new campaign to seize two eastern provinces Moscow claims on behalf of separatists. In a video, the commander of Ukraine's 36th Marine Brigade, one of the last units believed

to be holding out in Mariupol, asked for international help to escape the city's siege. "This is our appeal to the world. It may be our last. We may have only a few days or hours left," said Major Serhiy Volynia in a video uploaded to Facebook. "The enemy units are dozens of times larger than ours, they have dominance in the air, in artillery, in ground troops, in equipment and in tanks." Volynia spoke in front of a white brick wall in what sounded like a crowded room. Reuters could not verify where or when the video was filmed or who else might have been there. Russia's nearly eight-week-long invasion has failed to capture any of Ukraine's largest cities. Moscow was forced to retreat from northern Ukraine after an assault on Kyiv was repelled last month, but has poured troops back in for an assault on the east that began this week.

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## Govt to restore IMF programme; present people-friendly budget

Federal Cabinet forms committee to review ECL law: Marriyum Aurangzeb

**SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail said here on Wednesday that the government would make all out efforts to restore the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme with International Monetary Fund (IMF). Speaking at 'Meet the Press' organized by National Press Club, the finance minister, who was accompanied by Federal Minister Information and Broadcasting,



Marriyum Aurangzeb, said that government would do whatever was necessary to restore the programme. He said the government

could reduce public sector development spending with other necessary budgetary discipline arrangements. "We will restore the programme. If government had to tighten its belt, it will do so," he said adding that no extra burden would be put on people. He said the government would give a people-friendly and development-friendly budget despite all odds created by the PTI government. He expressed the hope that value of rupee

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**APRIL 2022**

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ISLAMABAD: Chairman PTI Imran Khan chairs a meeting of his senior party officials to discuss current political situation. – DNA

## NA-33 Hangu By-Election Observation Report

# Low turnout by-polls marked by campaigning violations

SHAMIM SHAHID

ISLAMABAD, April 19, 2022: Abysmally low turnout, inconsistent procedural compliance, and widespread campaigning and canvassing on the polling day marked the NA-33 Hangu by-election, which remained peaceful and free of any controversy. With only 14 percent of the registered voters – 19 percent male voters and six percent female voters – exercising their right to vote, the Hangu by-election witnessed the lowest voter turnout among all by-elections held since General Election (GE) 2018. Women turnout made up almost 20 percent of the total polled votes. The constituency had recorded a 29 percent voter turnout in GE-2018. The campaigning and canvassing in the close vicinity of polling stations remained the most widespread violation of the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) code of conduct for contesting candidates and political parties. Free and Fair Election Network

(FAFEN) observers found camps setup by candidates or contesting parties in the vicinity of 76 percent of the observed polling stations. FAFEN observers found election materials in adequate quantities at most of the observed polling stations. Inside the polling booths, necessary arrangements were made to protect the secrecy of voters except for 12 percent of the observed booths where secrecy screens were placed in a manner that compromised the voters' secrecy. The voting process was largely compliant with the legal and procedural instructions. However, sporadic instances of procedural irregularities were documented across the observed polling stations. At 24 percent of the observed polling stations, FAFEN observers reported instances of voters being turned away as their names were not listed on the electoral roll, indicating issues with either the polling scheme or lack of voter information particularly regarding the use of ECP 8300 service. According to observers, the security officials

were allowing voters to enter the polling stations only after checking their National Identity Cards (NICs) outside 81 percent, and voter parichis outside 57 percent of the observed polling stations, a responsibility that is not assigned to them. The Election Commission may clarify the role of the police and security officials on guard outside the polling stations in their code of conduct. The compliance with the due procedure for closing of the poll and ballot counting process was noted to be varied across the polling stations. The ballots at 39 percent of the observed polling stations were counted with open doors, compromising the security of the process. Following the preparation of results, the polling officials provided copies of Form-45 (Result of the Count) to the polling agents in 83 percent of the observed polling stations, but they did not paste it at a conspicuous place outside the polling station building for public inspection in case of 44 percent polling stations, an area which needs further emphasis in

the training of Presiding Officers. Moreover, the polling agents/candidates refused to sign forms 45 and 46 (Ballot Paper Account) each at 11 percent of the observed polling stations. The ECP had set up 210 polling stations, assigning more than 1,200 voters to 156 (74 percent) polling station, which is a legally recommended limit of voters assigned to a polling station. Moreover, FAFEN observers reported more than one polling booth in the same room at 35 (39 percent) polling stations making the polling space congested for voters. FAFEN had deployed a total of 33 non-partisan, trained and duly accredited observers including 24 men and nine women. This report is based on the observation of polling process at 222 polling booths of 89 polling stations and the counting process at 18 polling stations. Three political parties i.e. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUI-P) and Awami National Party (ANP) had fielded their candidates for NA-33 Hangu by-election while two candi-

dates ran independently. According to the ECP result, the largest votes share (48.7 percent) was bagged by PTI candidate, followed by the JUI-P (42.8 percent) and ANP (7.8 percent). The independent candidates secured 0.7 percent of the polled votes. A comparison of votes polled to two main contenders (PTI and JUI-P) during GE-2018 and recent by-election shows a marked increase in PTI's vote share, which rose from 36.9 percent in 2018 to 48.7 percent in 2022 while JUI-P's vote share also increased from 36.0 percent to 42.8 percent in 2022 by-election. According to FORM-47 (Provisional Consolidated Statement of the Results of the Count), a total 537 votes were excluded from the count. During the General Election 2018, Mr. Khayal Zaman had won this constituency on PTI's ticket by securing 28,819 polled votes while the JUI (P) Attiqur-Rehman was declared as runner-up candidate by securing 27,968 polled votes. The seat had fallen vacant due to the death of Mr. Kahyal Zaman on February 14, 2022. The winner in the by-election is son of the deceased legislator.

## Profiteers should not be spared at any cost

YOOSUF BHUTTA

Gujrat: Secretary Special Education Punjab Mr. Afzal Ahmed visited the wheat procurement center Gujrat and Ramzan Bazarsat Railway Road, and Model Bazar. He inspected the arrangements for procurement of wheat and examined stalls in Ramadan bazaars. Assistant Commissioner UmerDrazGondal also accompanied him. Secretary Special Education Mr. Afzal Ahmed visited the Center for wheat procurement in Gujrat. He said that a target has been set to purchase 20,000 metric tons of wheat in Gujrat district. The distribution of Bardana to the farmers has been started while the rate of Rs. 2,200 per maund has been fixed. Secretary Special Education Afzal Ahmed directed the officials to provide the best facilities to the farmers at the procurement centers. He reiterated, "Excellent security and traffic arrangements should be made and implementation of Punjab Government's directives for redressal of grievances should be ensured." Earlier, as per the directions of the Punjab government, the Secretary Special Education inspected the stalls of fruits, vegetables, meat, sugar, flour and groceries in the Ramadan bazaars and directed

that food items be sold in the Ramadan bazaars and open market at the fixed prices during the month of Ramadan. Profiteers should not be spared at any cost, he added. Rs.34.53 million released for Zakat beneficiaries District Chairman Zakat Committee Chaudhry Bilal Ahmad said that funds of Rs. Rs.34.53 million has been released, 3477 Zakat beneficiaries have been paid Rs.9000 per person in the second half of the year in terms of living allowance. He expressed these views during a media briefing here on Tuesday. District Zakat Officer AmjadJaved was also present on the occasion. He said that Rs. 31.29 million has been released at the rate of Rs. 9,000 per person while Rs. 2,160 thousand has been released to 180 blind persons at the rate of Rs.12,000 per head. Chaudhry Bilal Chairman Zakat Committee further said that the zakat beneficiaries will receive this amount very soon. This payment is being made through Telenor Easy Paisa. Receipt messages will be issued to the beneficiaries from 3737 soon and the service charges have been paid by the Zakat Department to the company while the beneficiaries will receive the full amount of Zakat.

## CM opens billion of rupees schemes in native Swat

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan on Wednesday paid a Day long visit to Tehsil Charbagh and Kabal of district Swat where he performed ground breaking of various development projects including Swat University Women campus, Malam Jabba to Shangla top road, upgradation of Khawaza khela hospital, Junkie Khel, Azai Khel, Motorzai irrigation channel, Khawaza Khela Bypass road, Veterinary University, 132 KV Kabal grid station, Kanjoo Bypass road, sports complex and other important projects of public welfare. He also inaugurated a number of recently completed development projects including upgradation of Tehsil Head quarter hospital to category C hospital, Tehsil Complex Kabal etc. Talking to media persons during his visit, the chief minister said that the provincial government during the last four years had made multi-sectoral planning to put this province on the path of sustainable development and now the same was being implemented on ground everywhere in the province adding that most of those projects were now due for completion. He said that work on a number of new projects has also been started. He said that dream of the people of Swat about their development and prosperity now was being converted into reality adding that long term development planning for next thirty to forty years has been done for Swat. Mahmood Khan further stated that he will soon visit to Dir, Buner and other parts of the province where

he will inaugurate multiple development projects completed by the incumbent provincial government. Responding to a question, the chief minister said that incumbent federal government was a kind of an interim government which will hardly last three months adding that most of the members of federal cabinet were on bail in various cases whereas so called incumbent prime minister was also facing corruption charge of Rs. 16 billion. He said that Imran Khan has started a public movement against this imported government f adding that millions of people were now protesting peacefully on Imran Khan's call across the country. Mahmood Khan was optimistic that under the sincere and dynamic leadership of Imran Khan, Pakistan will become an Islamic welfare state in real sense as per the vision of its founder Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. He maintained that after the successful protest in Peshawar and Karachi, today PTI will show its street power at Lahore and the people of Punjab will also made it clear that they were not ready to accept this imported government. Responding to another question, the chief minister said that shelter homes established in the province and Sehat Card scheme were pro poor initiatives of PTI government which would not be closed at any cost adding that the provincial government was making necessary legislation in order to run these welfare initiatives on permanent basis so that any other government in future could not stop these poor-friendly projects.

## RCCI urges promoting trade ties with Kyrgyzstan

RAWALPINDI: Kyrgyzstan is the shortest entry point of Pakistani products to the 'Eurasian Economic Markets' of 182 million people comprising Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Belarus and Armenia. These remarks were made by Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) President Nadeem Rauf, while addressing the Kyrgyz-Pakistan Trade & investment forum here on Wednesday. He said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan have cordial relations, and there is a vast potential for bilateral trade between them in various fields, including agriculture, textile and pharmaceutical industry. The forum was organised by the Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with the support of the USAID Regional Office for Economic Integration, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Nadeem further said that the bilateral trade amounted to \$5.9 million in 2021, with Pakistan's exports amounting to \$5.3 million and imports \$600,000. He added that there is a need to increase bilateral trade links and networking at the chamber of commerce level and suggest bilateral sector-specific exhibitions on a reciprocal basis. The purpose of the forum was to establish and develop contacts between the business circles of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. – APP

## Justice delayed is justice denied: DPO

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Bahawalpur: District Police Officer Abadit Nisar issued orders for immediate legal action on the petitions received from the Prime Minister, Chief Minister Portal and 1787. Delay in legal proceedings on petitions received through these forums is not acceptable in any case. A special desk has been set up in the DPO office for follow-up of applications to the Prime Minister, Chief Minister Portal and 1787. District Police Officer Abadit Nisar while instructing the police officers across the district said that every request coming to the police requires action as per law but when these requests come from the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Chief Minister of Punjab or 1787. Donors' expectations will naturally rise due to the high profile nature of the forums, and meeting the public's expectations regarding legal action should be a top priority for the police. The DPO said that delay in justice is tantamount to denial of justice. Delay in justice turns trivial matters into serious problems. He directed that immediate legal action be taken on the petitions received from the



Prime Minister, Chief Minister Portal and 1787, monitoring of follow-up measures in this regard. A special desk has been set up in the DPO office for follow-up of legal action on these applications on a daily basis. The DPO said that

the parameters on which the performance of the police would be checked at the district level would include prompt action on the petitions received from the Prime Minister, Chief Minister Portal and 1787 as an important point.

## Public relief package increased by govt: DC

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHHRAN: Deputy Commissioner Lodhran Capt (retd) Shoaib Ali has said that the public relief package has been further increased by the government. It has been directed to reduce the price of 10 kg flour bag from Rs. 550 to Rs. 400 while the price of sugar per kg has been reduced from Rs. 80 to Rs. He said that measures have been taken to provide all possible relief to the people during the holy month of Ramadan. The district administration is focusing on the availability of garlic, tomato, egg, chicken, mutton, beef, rice, ghee and oil in Ramadan bazaars. He was accompanied on the occasion by Assistant Commissioner Lodhran Farhan Mujtaba and other administrative officers. The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the quality of goods provided in Ramzan Bazaar and the sale at fixed prices. He also directed to make the provision of facilities in Ramzan



Bazaar foolproof. 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 were being sold in Ramadan Bazaar at below market prices. The Deputy Commissioner said that the administrative officers should keep a close watch on the prices of food items. He di-

rected to continue the monitoring process uninterrupted. He said that giving subsidy on food items in Ramadan Bazaar is a revolutionary step of the government. He further said that a discount of Rs. 10 less than the market is being given in ghee and cooking oil. 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 is available in abundance in Ramadan bazaars which is constantly monitored by the food department and district administration. He said that the district administration 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 commodities in Ramadan bazaars is also being ensured so that essential commodities are available in abundance to the consumers. He further said that for the convenience of the people, Waiting rooms, medical camps and grievance cells have also been set up. He said that the price lists of all the essential items available in Ramzan Bazaar are also displayed prominently. He also inspected the quality of sugar, fruits, vegetables and other items in the Ramadan Bazaar and directed to ensure their abundant supply.

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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
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ISLAMABAD: CEO and Founder of Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal and President ICCI Shakil Muneer hosted iftar dinner for the outgoing Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad Hamza Shafqaat. Also seen in the picture are Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General UBG, Nadeem Rauf President RCCI and others. – DNA

# Food insecurity due to climate change: Sherry

Senator Rehman said Pakistan was suffering from food insecurity due to climate change and water scarcity. Minister Sherry Rehman said, “Climate Change is a very important and serious issue, particularly in developing countries such as Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Wednesday assumed the charge of the Ministry of Climate Change. Secretary Ministry of Climate Change Kazim Niaz and other officials briefed Federal Minister Senator Sherry Rehman, said a news release. Senator Rehman said Pakistan was suffering from food insecurity due to climate change and water scarcity. Minister Sherry Rehman said, “Climate Change is a very important and serious issue, particularly in developing countries such as Pakistan. So far approximately 80% of the urban population lack access to clean drinking water. Pakistani cities rank highly on the air pollution score in the world and one in ten deaths amongst children under five are caused by air

pollution and 128,000 people die from airborne particulate matter yearly in Pakistan. What we have seen so far are headless climate change ministries that fail to blip on the federal government’s own policy radar. We need to rethink our policies and coordinate priorities quickly”, said a news release. She continued, “First and foremost, a policy roadmap beyond planting trees is needed. At the same time public awareness and community buy-in is crucial if we are to combat climate change as a nation. We need the Ministries’ priorities and policies to be up and running to focus on all key challenges, particularly the terrible damage caused by waste and pollution of all resources; behaviour change needs messaging, in language that should also be easily accessible by the common citizen. Our population needs to be made aware of the ever-increas-

ing danger we face at the hands of climate change. We as a society don’t really understand that Pakistan will be threatened by even deeper social instability than it faces today without a public plan that focuses on action.



Climate action is not just about planting trees, but much more. Pollution of our water and air, temperature rise , have caused incalculable costs to the country, to its soil, to its people and exposed us to disease and vulnerability. Whilst the potential cost of cli-

mate inaction is varied, the estimated consensus is a shocking \$3.8 billion annually. It is a painful irony of climate change that those least responsible for the problem are often the ones most exposed to its ravages. Global climate change has been partly caused by greenhouse gas emissions by industrialist countries. “Pakistan contributes only 6% of the world’s emissions, yet is one of the countries consistently ranked amongst the most vulnerable to the harmful effects of climate change. Environmental pollution, air pollution, smog eradication, water scarcity, public awareness and a number of other key issues are among our policy priorities.” When speaking about the water crises she stated, “Pakistan is primarily dependent on the Indus River system as it supports 90% of our agricultural industry. It is immensely affected by climate change, result-

ing in frequent flooding. We rank third in the number of countries facing severe water shortages. Our four major crops i.e. cotton, wheat, sugarcane and rice are all water-dependent. A number of challenges await the ministry in this regard and our focus will be not only on policy reform but also on increasing awareness so that general public is aware of steps that they can take. Pakistan has been water-stressed since 1981 and the UN predicts we will be water-scarce by 2025. The water crisis is an issue that affects everyone. We must make positive large scale and small scale changes that will eventually lead to a more positive impact on the environment.” On the topic of pollution, she said, “Air pollution has been one of the more prominent fallout of overall climate degradation, particularly in Pakistan, where city centers become routinely choked with smog and thick layers of visible smoke.

## President condoles demise of MNA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Tuesday expressed condolences over the death of the Member National Assembly of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement Iqbal Muhammad Ali. “A very decent knowledgeable colleague of mine. We sat next to each other in NA 2013-18,” the president wrote on Twitter. The president also talked to late Iqbal Muhammad Ali’s son to convey his feelings to the grieved family. He also prayed for peace of the departed soul and courage to the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude.

## USC reduces sugar, flour prices

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In order to provide maximum relief to the poor masses across the country the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) has reduced the prices of sugar and flour. The reduction in prices has been made on the orders of the Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, said USC Spokesperson in a statement issued here. he said, the price of sugar has been reduced by Rs 15 per kg while a special reduction of Rs 75 per 10 kg bag of flour has also been made. He said that sugar would be available at Rs 70 per kg at all utility stores across the country, whereas 10 kg bag of flour would be available at Rs 400 and a 20 kg bag at Rs 800. The spokesperson advised the consumers to bring a copy of their Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) and avail of the federal government’s Ramzan Relief Package. He said, USC seeks to ensure abundant supply of subsidized goods and sale of other food items on subsidized rates.

## Govt notifies transfer, posting of officers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday notified transfer and posting of high rank officers. According to a notification issued by Establishment Division, Ms. Aisha Humera Chaudhary a BS-21 officer of Secretariat Group, presently posted as Senior Joint Secretary, Commerce Division, is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary, Information Technology and Telecommunication Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. While, Dr. Shahzad Khurshid, a BS-19 officer of Secretariat Group, presently posted as Deputy Secretary, States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Division, is transferred and posted as Deputy Secretary, National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. – APP

## ITP's campaign in full swing to check rules violations

ISLAMABAD: The campaign of Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) to check violation of traffic rules is in full swing and special efforts are being made to maintain traffic discipline in the city. The main objective of this road safety campaign is to ensure safety to people while road users are being educated for lane discipline during drive. Following directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younis, Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Rai Mazhar Iqbal has constituted special teams to control lane violation on various roads and ensure smooth flow of traffic in the city. Strict checking is being made against those not using helmets during bike ride, using mobile phone and not fastening seat belts during drive. ITP’s team remain present on all important roads including Islamabad Expressway, Srinagar (Kashmir) highway to educate road users about traffic rules. ITP’s FM Radio 92.4 is also disseminating the messages about road safety and to educate audience about traffic rules. SSP (Traffic) has appealed the citizens to cooperate with the force by following traffic laws. He said that action would be taken against those not following lanes during drive as the sole purpose is to ensure safe road environment in the city. He hoped that citizens will follow traffic rules and help ITP through their cooperation in ensuring secure traffic system in the city. Those violating traffic rules will be fined and safer road environment would be ensured through constant monitoring. SSP (Traffic) Rai Mazhar Iqbal maintained. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: Qamar Zaman Kaira, Advisor to the PM on Kashmir and Gilgit Affairs taking briefing at Ministry. – DNA

## For a better Pakistan: a pioneer strives for TCMP

CMEC has provided me with generous salary and benefits, so my family also live in abundance. I have been honored as Outstanding Employee 2021 for CPEC Projects, which was the biggest reward for me

DNA

ISLAMABAD: For a better Pakistan: a pioneer “Pakistan Li Kui, great!” Izat Khan has been striving hard for Thar Coal Mine Project, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. Izat Khan is a Logistic Commercial Assistant in the Thar Coal Mine Block II of China National Machinery Engineering Corporation (CMEC). Due to his burly stature and hard work, some Chinese colleagues nicknamed him “Li Kui”, a heroic figure in the Chinese classic Water Margin. “I adore this name,” Khan always uses the Chinese name to introduce himself to new colleagues. In December 2015, a group

from CMEC Thar Coal Mine Project Department came to the endless Thar Desert from Beijing. At that time, the construction site was full of yellow sand and there were no roads. What’s worse, their first bulldozer could only be pulled by a trailer to the camp two kilometers away from the site. However, there was no suitable equipment to unload the bulldozer. Luckily, a local man provided prompt help, “I heard that Chinese people came to help Pakistan build a coal mine.” He found a forklift and then helped solve the storage battery problem of the bulldozer. Afterwards, he asked if he could join CMEC team. His diligence left a very deep impression on

everyone. In this way, Izat Khan successfully joined CMEC in January 2016. “Now, I’m in charge of assisting the on-site commercial manager to regulate all aspects of our supply chain, including goods dispatch, material loading and unloading, and equipment inventory management,” Izat Khan noted in an exclusive interview with Gwadar Pro, “In addition, I am also responsible for coordinating equipment such as dump trucks, excavators, generators, wheel bulldozers and hoisting machinery. Sometimes I need to communicate with project owners and subcontractors to help them solve difficulties.” In the eyes of leaders and colleagues, Izat Khan always

faces the difficulties without batting an eye, setting a silent example to others. According to Liu Zhe, an on-site commercial manager of CMEC, the first batch of six containers of materials sent from China needed to be delivered to the project site, but the trailer suddenly got stuck in the sandy road. At that time, Izat Khan knelt on the ground to scoop up the sand and drag the wire rope to pull the trailer out of the bunker. With the joint efforts of Chinese and Pakistani employees, all six trailers were finally “out of danger”. “It was in May and the temperature in the Thar Desert was approaching 50°C. Izat Khan’s clothes were completely soaked, and his dark face was full of

sweat,” Liu recalled. In Khan’s opinion, all his hard work has paid off. “Our project has been very helpful for me and my family in regards of financial condition. After joining Thar Coal Mine Project, I have built a new house for my family in my hometown. CMEC has provided me with generous salary and benefits, so my family also live in abundance. I have been honored as Outstanding Employee 2021 for China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Projects, which was the biggest reward for me. When I was informed by the Chinese Embassy, it was one of the meaningful moments in my life. My family and friends were also very excited. All of them congratulated me on such a huge reward and recognition.” In 2017, Izat Khan’s eldest son also came to work for the Thar Coal Mine Project. “Izat Khan enthusiastically showed many photos, telling us that his house had been renovated, the dishes on the dinner table had become more and more abundant, and all his family members had bought new clothes. We were also happy for him,” Liu said. As the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative and CPEC, the Thar Coal Mine Project has created more than 3,000 local jobs during the construction period and provided about 2,000 employment and professional skills training opportunities every year.



## Briefs

## Seafood exports increase by 2.04pc in 3 quarters

ISLAMABAD: The exports of fish and fish preparations increased by 2.04 percent during the first three quarters of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The seafood exports during July-March (2021-22) were recorded at \$309.979 million against the exports of \$303.782 million in July-March (2020-21), showing growth of around 2.04 per cent, according to Pakistan Bureau of statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the seafood trade declined by 14.55 percent as its exports decreased from 136,971 metric tons to 116,514 metric tons. On year-on-year basis, the fish exports from the country however declined by 19.81 percent by going down from \$52.583 million during March 2021 to \$42.168 million in March 2022. On month-on-month basis, the seafood exports however surged by 16.40 percent when compared to the exports of \$36.227 million in February 2020, the PBS data revealed. Meanwhile, the overall food exports from the country witnessed an increase of 18.92 percent during the first three quarters of the current fiscal year. These exports were recorded at \$3,961.469 million during July-March (2021-22) as compared to \$3,331.257 million in July-March (2020-21). Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports of food commodities increased by 10.22 percent during the month of March 2022 as compared to the same month of last year. The food exports during March 2022 were recorded at \$526.466 million against the exports of \$477.668 million. It is pertinent to mention here that the overall exports from the country witnessed an increase of 24.67 percent during the first nine months of the current fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding months of last year. The exports from the country were recorded at \$23.298 billion during July-March (2021-22) against the exports of \$18.687 billion recorded during July-March (2020-21), showing growth of 24.67 percent. – APP

## NA offers Fateha for late MNA, victims of Dadu

ISLAMABAD: The lawmakers in the National Assembly Wednesday offered 'Fateha' for their colleague Iqbal Muhammad Ali Khan, who passed away in Karachi after protracted illness the other day. As the House proceedings started, Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf expressed deep grief and sorrow over the passing away of MuttahidaQaumi Movement-Pakistan MNA Iqbal Ali Khan, besides tragic deaths of eight children and a woman in a fire incident that occurred in District Dadu of Sindh province. He requested MNA Syed Mehmood Shah to lead the prayer for the deceased lawmaker and victims of the Dadu fire incident. – APP

## Rupee sheds Rs 1.49 against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Exchange rate of Pak Rupee weakened by Rs 1.49 against the US Dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs185.92 against the previous day's closing of Rs184.43. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs183.6 and Rs185.3 respectively. The price of Euro also appreciated by Rs 2.22 and closed at Rs 201.11 against the previous day's closing of Rs 198.89. The Japanese Yen remained unchanged to close at Rs 1.44, whereas an increase of Rs 2.06 was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound, which was traded at Rs 241.97 as compared to its last closing of Rs 239.91. – APP

## PTDC and Mishal Pakistan join hands to promote research

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and Mishal Pakistan here Wednesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to promote research in tourism sector of Pakistan to develop national travel and tourism competitiveness index on annual basis. Managing Director PTDC, Aftab ur Rehman Rana signed the MoU on behalf of PTDC while CEO Mishal Pakistan, Amir Jahangir signed from the other side to jointly work for bringing travel and tourism related initiatives into public discussions, through various interventions. Mishal Pakistan is the country partner institute of the World Economic Forum and PTDC is national tourism organizations of Pakistan. Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director, PTDC on the occasion said PTDC was working to promote tourism at home and abroad through its various initiatives and the launch of upcoming Tourism Brand Pakistan will serve as a milestone achieving major targets to open new avenues of tourism and project soft image of Pakistan as tourist destination. Amir Jahangir the Chief Executive Officer of Mishal Pakistan said, "this partnership is a significant step towards institutionalizing the travel and tourism policy making efforts by focusing on improving the tourism sector data". He further said, "Pakistan is making a conscious effort to showcase and improve country's travel and tourism industry on global competitiveness rankings. This will improve not only the country's image in the long run but would also impact the travel and tourism related global indicators as well." The prime focus of this MoU is to establish a working relationship between PTDC and Mishal Pakistan



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to establish a mechanism to collect necessary data on the growth of tourism sector in Pakistan and produce a national travel and tourism competitiveness index report annually to educate policy makers and industry stakeholders about the overall trends and challenges faced by the industry. Under this MoU, PTDC and Mishal will establish a mechanism at provincial and federal levels to compile tourism

and hospitality sector data and produce a research report on the overall growth of tourism sector in Pakistan, as a result it will also help in improving Pakistan's rankings on the International Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index which is biannually produced by the World Economic Forum. Mishal and PTDC will also organize trainings for journalists on how to report on travel and

tourism competitiveness related data and the reforms undertaken by PTDC to promote tourism in Pakistan. Mishal will assist PTDC in creating international linkages with technology platforms that can generate influence around public discourse including Google, META, Facebook, Instagram, and etc. This interaction will create new approaches for tourism awareness. Mishal will create multiple categories around travel and tourism at the annual journalism AGAHI Awards. It will create opportunities for PTDC to work with industry players and the academic institutions, especially the mass communications/journalism departments to create short film/documentary competitions and festivals on various verticals of travel, tourism and hospitality/generosity with RINSTRa and other industry players. PTDC has the vision to develop the tourism sector as a national priority in a sustainable and acceptable manner, taking full advantage of regional and international trends and developments so that it can significantly contribute to the improvement of quality of life in Pakistan whilst promoting the country's cultural and natural heritage. PTDC is the apex body in the country to create public policy options for the public as well as private sector to expand the business opportunities that can attract domestic and foreign tourists as their preferred destination for affordable and sustainable tourism.

## CDA's building control collects over Rs 7mln revenue

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority's (CDA) building control directorate had collected over Rs7 million revenue during the month of March. The revenue was collected on account of approvals of building plans, issuance of completion certificates, commercial charges and other heads including fines on account of non-conforming use, said its spokesman on Wednesday. The building control directorate, he said had fetched over Rs 400,000 revenue by issuing 7 completion certificates to residential buildings, whereas 14 building plans generated funds amounting over Rs 300,000. Similarly, around Rs 150,000 were fetched after approving building plans of three commercial buildings, while over Rs150,000 earned by issuing No-Objection-Certificate (NOCs) to 56 residential buildings. Likewise, the directorate generated Rs 3 million by issuing NOCs to 32 commercial buildings. As result of steps taken by the authority for ensuring financial discipline and financially strengthening the authority, revenue is increasing gradually. Instructions have been issued for ensuring strict financial discipline so that authority could be made financially stable, the spokesman added. – APP

## Funeral prayer for martyred cop offered

ISLAMABAD: The funeral prayer of martyred constable Muhammad Aqib was offered here at Police Lines Headquarters on Wednesday. A large number of police officers including IGP Muhammad AhsanYounus, officials of Islamabad administration, Pakistan Rangers and law enforcement agencies attended the funeral prayer. On a tip off, a police team conducted raid on drug peddlers in the precincts of Shehzad town police station. The accused opened fire on police party and constable Aqib received one bullet on his chest and was shifted to hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The capital police chief along with SSP operations Faisal Kamran and other senior officers rushed to the scene with heavy contingent and started search operation after cordoning off the area. Later the IGP visited hospital to express condolences to the family of deceased personnel. – APP

## HEC sets 30 as deadline for AIOU Scholarships

ISLAMABAD The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced that April 30, 2022 is deadline for Sri Lankan students to apply for scholarships under the "Allama Muhammad Iqbal Scholarship Scheme". According to the HEC Project Director (Pak-Sri Lanka Programme) Jehanzeb Khan these scholarships are offered to Sri Lankan youth for their capacity building through imparting quality education to 1000 scholars in various fields including Medicine, Engineering, Agriculture, Management, and Computer Science, etc. The project aims to promote an effective exchange of knowledge and better understanding of cultures and traditions between Sri Lankan and Pakistani students, he added. The selected, he said, candidates will study at top-ranked Pakistani universities, learn about Pakistani society and values, acquire leadership skills, and help fellow Pakistani students and community groups learn about their country and culture. The scholarships offer full tuition fee, maintenance allowance, hostel Charges, book allowance, and one-time travel cost. The female candidates are encouraged to apply for these scholarships. Sharing further details, it was told that this scholarship offer is open for all disciplines at BS, MS, and PhD

levels in Engineering, Basic and Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, including all subjects like Architecture, Fine Arts, Business Education, Computer Sciences, Information Technology, Agriculture Sciences,



Media & Communication studies, Languages, etc. As per instructions of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, 100 scholarships have been specifically allocated for MBBS studies. The Sri Lankan students may apply according to the category and availability of allotted seats given as; Fully Funded Scholarships which includes tuition fee, maintenance allowances, hostel charges, and book allowances. While Partial Funded Scholarships includes tuition fee only. Additional cost, if any besides charges, and book allowances, while tuition fee will be met by the Sri

Lankan students. On the closing date of admission, the age of applicant for undergraduate studies must not be more than 23 years and for postgraduate studies, the age should not be more than 35 years for non-faculty and 40 years for faculty members. Candidate will be short listed based on Aptitude Test Score (conducted by HEC) and academic credential scores. However, the medium of instruction will be English. The candidate will be required to return and serve Sri Lanka after completion of education in Pakistan. Candidate who is already availing any other HEC scholarship is not eligible to apply. Merit list will be prepared on the basis of information provided by the applicants. In case of partially funded scholarships, only tuition fee will be paid to the university. The rest of the expenditure will be met by Sri Lankan students. The applicants are required to submit the application online through HEC web portal: <http://eportal.hec.gov.pk/pksl>. The further details of the Programme are available at HEC website: <http://hec.gov.pk/site/pksl>. All registered candidates must appear in the scholarship test to be organised by HEC in collaboration with the Pakistan High Commission at Colombo and the Government of Sri Lanka. – APP

## TBTTTP helps revive 1.36 million acre area

ISLAMABAD: The flagship Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Plantation (TBTTTP) project of the Ministry of Climate Change has helped revive and protect 1.36 million acre area covered under massive tree planting carried out across the country. An official of the TBTTTP project told APP that the project was the first of its kind that had major consensus of all the federating units including Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir to implement massive afforestation initiative to make the country a climate resilient region. He told that the Ministry had set an ambitious target of 3.29 billion trees target for five years (2019-23) that would include spring plantation and monsoon plantations in the diverse ecological zones of the country where native and local environment adaptive plants species were being planted. The official informed that the Ministry after suc-

cessful achievements of all the federating units had achieved over one billion plantation target till December 2021. "As many as 1,424 billion plantation target has been achieved till December 2021 where more than 9,500 plantation sites have covered during the same time period. However, the largest ever spring season plantation target of 540 million trees has been set for 2022 whereas the plantation is underway", he added. He said tree planting was a very challenging task especially in the dry and barren areas as it required extra resources and manpower to ensure success of saplings in tough environment. Moreover, assisted natural regeneration has emerged as the most successful intervention as it required less resources and gave huge dividends in the form of massive regrowth of new seedlings leading to thriving green cover in that region. – APP

## Proposals invited under PSF-NSFC Scientific Exchange Program

ISLAMABAD: National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) and Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) have invited HEC chartered universities, research centers and institutes to submit joint proposals under the Joint Scientific Exchange Program. The call's research priority areas, aligned with the national strategies of both the countries, include computer science: Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, Biometrics, Big data and Virtual reality (VR)/ Augmented reality (AR), Deep Learning, Artificial Intelligence; Information and communication (including 5G); Mechanical design and manufactur-

ing (including Robotics, 3D printing, and Drones); Macro Governance and Policy; Climate Change and Mitigation and Water, Food and Ecosystem Security. According to an official of PSF, Chinese and Pakistani scientists should come to an agreement with each other using their own means of communications and jointly develop and complete their project proposal before submitting it to NSFC and PSF. NSFC and PSF do not match the collaborating partners. Chinese or Pakistani collaborator or partner should necessarily be identified in each submitted Joint Proposal. Project proposal must

provide detailed information on the objectives and justification of the year wise planned along with joint research work, the methodology to be followed, the composition of each research team and intended time schedule. The prescribed proforma for submission of joint research projects should be duly filled and submitted by the Chinese scientists to NSFC and by the Pakistani scientists to PSF, the official conveyed. Proposals submitted individually from any side without a Chinese or Pakistani collaborator will not be processed further. Curricula vitae of both research teams should be attached and the duration of the projects should not exceed two years. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Member of the US House of Representatives, Ms. Ilhan Omar calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. – APP

## English translation stressed of Sultan Bahoo books

ISLAMABAD: Speakers during the launching ceremony of two great books on Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo urged the nation that there was an urgent need to translate the literary works of Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo into English. "The books of Hazrat Sultan Bahoo are treasure troves of knowledge and wisdom. Writings of Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo are full of mysticism and embodies ideological footings against sectarianism, while teaching observance of rules, boundaries and etiquette. There is an urgent need to translate literary works of Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo into English". These views were expressed by the speakers during the launching ceremony of the English translation of two great books of Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo in Islamabad organized by

the MUSLIM Institute here Wednesday. The speakers include Dewan of Junagadh and Chairman MUSLIM Institute Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, Chairman Islamic Ideological Council Prof. Dr. QiblaAyaz, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan YerzhanKistafin, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to Sri Lanka Major General Dr. ShahidHashmat (R), Former Pakistan Additional Foreign Secretary Afrasiab Mehdi HashmiQureshi, Former Vice Chancellor of Rawalpindi Women University Prof. Dr. Alia Sohail Khan and translator of Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo's books Manzoor Ahmad Khan. The speakers said that in the time of Hadhrat Sultan Bahu, the Islamic world was not in any kind of slavery and our literature, our philosophy, economy, ideol-

ogy and other aspects of our civilization were practiced freely and these books were written during this period. Today, while translating them into English, we need free thought so that we can share our literature with others with a free thought. M A Khan's translations are unique in this regard. It is generally believed that anyone who is fluent in two languages ??can play the role of translator, but translating literature based on mystical experiences is not an easy task because mere language skills are inadequate and the spiritual aspect of Islam helps one to reach the true spirit of these books. Every Sufi goes through a unique spiritual experience. He explains spiritual terms directly in

accordance with his spiritual experience. Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo has coined unique terms to describe his spiritual experience. Sometimes, the reader feels that his experience was so vast that the present words were not enough to describe the experience. However, Hadhrat Sultan Bahu coined new terms to better describe his vast experiences. For the explanation of these terms, the translator M A Khan has also explained those peculiar terms in footnotes which is a proof of the dedication and hard work of the translator. The speakers further said that Hadhrat Sultan Bahoo, through his writings, introduced man to his true place which brings peace and stability in the socie-

ty. In this regard, he wrote 140 books in which Ain-ul-Faqr and Kalid-ul-Tawheed are the beacon of light. In the same way, their translations have a unique place in their nature. These books have been beautifully printed by Al-Arifeen Publications. If today's Islamic world is guided by the teachings of the Sufis, then Muslims can once again write a brilliant chapter in history. Contemporary insecurity and extremism are the result of our deviation from the teachings of Sufis. The books written by Hazrat Sultan Bahoo are full of wisdom and knowledge. Their specialty is that they affect and guide the common man and the scholar alike. The event was attended by people from all walks of life. – APP



## Provocative actions

**P**LANS by a far-right group to publicly burn copies of the Qur'an sparked violent clashes with counter-demonstrators for the third day running in Sweden, police said on Sunday. Litter bins, a bus and a car were all set on fire in a series of incidents in the southern city of Malmo overnight, police said in a statement. "The situation calmed down toward 3:00 am (0100 GMT)," police spokeswoman Kim Hild told SR public radio, adding that no officers were hurt, but a number of members of the public were slightly injured. Nearly 20 complaints had been filed, including for vandalism. There have been similar clashes in recent days over plans by the anti-immigration and anti-Islamic Stram Kurs (Hard Line) movement led by Danish-Swedish politician Rasmus Paludan to burn copies of the Qur'an in public. The clashes on Saturday broke out after a rally by the group's supporters on Saturday. Three police officers had to be taken to hospital after a riot broke out in the city of Linköping in eastern Sweden on Thursday. Two people were arrested at that protest. And on Friday, nine police officers were injured in similar clashes in Örebro in central Sweden. Meanwhile, Pakistan strongly condemned the recent abhorrent act of desecration of the Holy Quran during rallies in Sweden, says a press release. The Foreign Office said that Pakistan also strongly condemned the offensive remarks made by a Dutch politician, attacking Islam and the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. "These mindless provocative Islamophobic incidents serve no purpose other than hurting the sensitivities of over 1.5 billion Muslims living all over the world. Such actions are not covered under legitimate expressions of the right to freedom of expression or opinion, which carry responsibilities under international human rights law, such as the obligation not to carry out hate speech and incite people to violence, the FO statement said. "Muslims, including in Pakistan, unequivocally condemn the practice of insulting Islam, Christianity and Judaism alike, and stand against all acts of violence on the basis of religion or belief. These principles must be equally respected and supported by all," FO said. The international community needs to show a common resolve against xenophobia, intolerance and incitement to violence on the basis of religion or belief, and work together for promoting inter-faith harmony and peaceful co-existence. That has been the spirit behind the OIC's recent initiative led by Pakistan at the UN General Assembly to designate 15 March as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. To make the West understand that their lives and livelihoods are not in danger and no Muslim immigrant boards a flight to tear through their markets or open fire at churches, Muslim organisations and representatives should pull up their socks and get down to the dissemination business.

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## Ukraine war: a new phase

**R**USSIA'S war on Ukraine has entered a new phase with the launch of its punishing offensive on the eastern Donbas region. Almost 5 million Ukrainians have now fled their country. Yet on Friday and Saturday, for the first time since Mr Putin's troops invaded on 24 February, more people crossed into Ukraine from Poland than left that way. Some of those will have been aid workers; many were Ukrainians who hoped that the withdrawal of Russian forces from central areas of the country late last month allowed at least a temporary return to their homes or a brief reunion with husbands, fathers and sons. It might superficially appear that the war is entering a no less vicious but at least more predictable phase with its concentration in the Donbas. After eight years of war there, claiming over 14,000 lives, its people now face a relentless barrage of missiles as Moscow attacks along a 300-mile front. Around 70% are estimated to have left the region already, and some local officials have urged all civilians to evacuate. Russian forces had seized the city of Kremnna within hours. In the south, they were attempting to crush the last resistance in Mariupol, aiming to create a land bridge between annexed Crimea and the east. At least 1,000 civilians, including children and the elderly, were reportedly sheltering in the Azovstal steelworks as the Russian military advanced on the last Ukrainian troops holding out in underground passages there. Set against this are claims of low morale among Mr Putin's troops, who face Ukraine's most experienced forces, spirits raised by their country's initial success in repelling Russia. The flow of arms from western countries, while still well short of Kyiv's aspirations, is steadily increasing in scope as well as quantity. Above all, Ukrainians have every reason to fight. They have seen that Russian "liberation" may leave little more than ruins. They assume Mr Putin's aim remains the subjugation of the whole of their country, with victory in the east not a suitable, face-saving exit from an unexpectedly bruising conflict but a staging post along the road to complete domination. Yet they are painfully aware that Russian failures can come at a high cost too: the brutality seen in Bucha and elsewhere; the threat of non-conventional weapons. With families, homes and communities shattered by the earlier attacks or the shadow of conflict, the best that Ukrainians outside the east can expect for now is a temporary respite. Meanwhile, it is not only Ukrainians who are chilled by the prospect of further escalation. Fifty-five days after this war began, its end appears no clearer or closer.

# The cause, and the goal, of Israeli violence

Mark Muhannad Ayyash

This drive towards supreme sovereignty explains why all this destruction in just 11 days, piled as it is on top of the long continuum of Israeli violence, did not satisfy the majority of the Israeli public. When the ceasefire came into effect, a poll published on Israel's Channel 12 "indicated that 72 percent of Israelis thought the air campaign in Gaza should continue, whereas 24 percent...

**A**NOTHER Ramadan, another attack on Palestinian worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem. In explaining the Israeli attacks, the majority of Euro-American politicians, media analysts, and commentators, exemplified in this predictably inane CBC report, are emphasising the "high tensions" that come along with the confluence of three major religious events, and framing Israeli actions as a response to the "Palestinian terrorist attacks" in four Israeli cities. Palestinians are accustomed to hearing these types of explanations that basically present a distorted picture of a religious conflict that is caused by political Islamist ideologies and their bigotry, intolerance, and hatred towards Jews. The Palestinian people, who are quintessentially defending their right to exist and live on the lands that they have called home for generations across centuries, are labelled by Israel and its Euro-American allies as violent, hateful, emotional, irrational, and backwards people who continuously cause cycles of violence. Underneath this superstruc-

ture of fanciful Israeli and Euro-American ideologies, political sophistry, and ahistorical narratives, is the brute reality of settler-colonial conquest. The reason Israel has launched this latest attack is the same reason that it has launched so many before it and will be the reason for their coming attacks: The Israeli state is built on a foundation of settler colonial sovereignty. Embedded at the foundation of the Israeli state, continuously animating its actions and policies, regardless of which political party or coalition is in power, is the idea that Israel, as a Jewish majority nation-state, must secure and expand supreme sovereign control over the land of historic Palestine. This is the cause and the goal of Israeli violence. These acts of violence are not about security, law and order, or maintaining the status quo. They are revelatory of the Israeli drive to assert supreme Israeli sovereignty over Palestine and Palestinians. The message of these acts of violence is this: Israel has the final and last judgement on the life and death of Palestinians, and there are no serious consequences for Israelis and no tangible recourse for Palestinians once those judgments are decided, sometimes at a whim. This aspiration towards supreme power is prevalent throughout Israeli politics and society and has been for some time. It was almost a year ago that Israel launched a devastating military onslaught on the Gaza Strip in the wake of similar events that are happening today: expulsions of Palestinians from their homes and the desecration of Muslim places of worship. From May 10 to May 21, 2021, an 256 Palestinians were killed, including 66 children, and nearly 2,000 Palestinians were injured, including more than 600 children, 400 women, and 1,000 men. The infrastructural damage was severe: Some 2,000 housing units were either destroyed or severely damaged; 15,000 housing units suffered some damage; multiple water and sanitation facilities and infrastructure were damaged (leaving approximately 800,000 people without regular access to safe water), 58 education facilities, nine hospitals and nineteen primary healthcare centres all suffered some damage. There was an estimated \$89m worth of damage to the energy, agricultural, and industrial sectors. Again, these acts of violence are clearly disproportionate and not necessary for the proclaimed goal of "Israeli security." They arise out of and are meant to cement and achieve total and absolute Israeli Jewish sovereign power over the Palestinians. When this dehumanisation of Palestinians appears in mainstream media and public discourse within Israeli

and Euro-American spaces, it is framed in a normalising manner. For example, last year in a New York Times report, the desire for the majority of Israelis to continue the onslaught on Gaza is framed as Israelis simply wanting a "final conclusion" to "a very unpleasant situation", and a "decisive victory against Hamas." Even when Israelis expressed genocidal wishes against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, when an Israeli person states, "the government should wipe out Gaza once and for all," even in that situation, the CBC's flagship nightly news programme, The National, found a way to cleanse and make presentable these expressions of a genocidal and eliminatory drive. In their feeble narratives, the New York Times presented Israeli quotes as frustrated Israelis who just want peace and quiet; the CBC framed the genocidal statement as scared Israelis who want security and are understandably angry. Both narratives offer nothing in the way of revealing the reality of violence, but rather themselves participate in the concealment of that reality. That's where we are still today in the same place we have been for decades: mainstream and dominant international discourse focuses on distractions and distorted pictures of what is happening to Palestinians, while Israel continues to unleash violence that is caused by and geared towards the goal of supreme sovereignty. This is a form of sovereignty that has nothing to do with the complex and rich religion of Judaism and the Jewish tradition. Rather, following the logic of colonial modernity, this form of sovereignty, akin to other Euro-American (neo)colonial and settler-colonial states such as the United States, seeks to establish a kind of power that diverse cultures and religions across human history have reserved only for the gods: a kind of power that allows an entity to act with impunity because it is the first and last judge. This latest attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound has little to nothing to do with a supposed Muslim-Jewish clash and has much more to do with a form of sovereignty that attempts to secure and establish a god-like power for a particular settler-colonial nationality. So long as the Israeli project is driven by the aspiration towards supreme power and sovereignty over Palestinians and Palestine, then we will be writing about Israeli attacks on Palestinian worshippers for years to come. Nothing short of a foundational transformation in the logic and structures of colonial modernity will prevent what is, at this moment, an inevitable outcome: more death and destruction for Palestinians and Palestine.

— Courtesy: Al Jazeera

# Where does Tehran stand on the developments in Pakistan?

Dr. Mohammed Al-Sulami

Firstly are concerns related to the Taliban; Iran believes that Khan's cooperation with China and Iran aborted what it claimed were US plots to turn the Taliban into a threat to Afghanistan's neighboring countries. Political analysts close to the Iranian regime insist that the US is behind Khan's ouster, asserting that Sharif has been brought in to implement Washington's schemes for the region. These analysts suggest that recent attacks on the Iranian Embassy in Kabul and the Iranian Consulate in Herat...

**I**N recent weeks, the Pakistani arena has witnessed accelerating and massive developments — starting with the efforts of Prime Minister Imran Khan to outwit his rivals' attempts to put his government to a no-confidence vote in parliament by filing a request with the president of the republic to dissolve the legislative assembly. Khan's wish came true, but the country's Supreme Court ruled that the dissolution of parliament was unconstitutional, rendering the decision null and void. Consequently, a stormy parliamentary session led to a majority vote in favor of a withdrawal of confidence from Khan's government, making Imran Khan the first prime minister in the country's history to be forced to step down by a no-confidence vote. Last Monday, the parliament elected Shehbaz Sharif, the Muslim League Party leader, to replace Khan as prime minister. Under Khan, relations between Tehran and Islamabad witnessed noticeable improvements, especially at the political and security levels, along with efforts to promote ties at the economic and commercial levels. Iran welcomed Khan's approach, focusing on turning eastwards, enhancing Pakistan's relations with Russia and China, and distancing the country from Iran's adversaries and regional archrivals. Since the start of the latest political crisis, however, Tehran has avoided fiery statements, adopting a cautious position on the developments in its eastern neighbor. Saeed Khatibzadeh, the spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, initially announced that his country was closely following the events in Pakistan, claiming that they were perfectly normal under the Pakistani parliamentary system. Khatibzadeh avoided Iran's customary reaction of accusing any foreign entity of being behind the events, adding later that Iran respected the democratic and legal mechanisms enshrined in Pakistani law and that Iran "trusts and respects the choices of the Pakistani lawmakers." Secondly, Ahmad Nabavi, the former secretary-general of the People's Solidarity Party — known as Hemmat — has described the Taliban as the gravest potential threat to Iran, claiming that the group might be ready to engage in

an alleged Western plot against Iran in return for obtaining recognition. He described what happened in Pakistan as a semi-democratic coup and the new prime minister as a puppet in the hands of Washington. Thirdly are the concerns about security chaos at the Iran-Pakistan border. A member of the Iranian parliament has expressed his worries about this possibility in light of the assembly's foreign policy and the national security committee's previous lauding of Khan's cooperation with Iran on security issues. He said that the radical groups' activities had been curbed to a great degree under Khan, with checkpoints being set up in Pakistani border areas, which led to a significant drop in attacks on Iranian outposts and border points. In fact, Iran fears that security coordination with Pakistan will decline with the change of leadership, prompting radical groups to mount attacks on its border outposts. And finally, there are concerns about Israel. There is a fear in Iran that the close ties between the new prime minister and the Arabian Gulf states could lead to a rapprochement between Islamabad and Tel Aviv and normalization of relations between the two states, thereby creating a foothold for Tel Aviv in another country neighboring the Middle East. Khan claimed on Nov. 13, 2021 that some countries had been exerting pressure on Pakistan to officially recognize Israel. Tehran also fears an advancement of relations between Riyadh and Islamabad under the new prime minister, after these ties were strained during Khan's time as prime minister when the two countries had differences on a number of thorny issues. On balance, it could be said that despite neighborliness and the several commonalities between Iran and Pakistan, the level of relations between the two countries depends on the orientations of the Pakistani leadership and on Pakistan's complicated political and economic calculus, which requires it to establish balanced ties with Tehran but take into account the interests of all its regional and international allies.

— Courtesy: Arab News

## Pakistan & France ties to prioritize agriculture

Samra Athar Kakakhel

Pakistan has socioeconomic, political, and health issues, as well as gender discrepancies and difference in literacy in both urban and rural populations. On the other hand if we see so, Pakistan's water resources are under severe strain due to high agricultural productivity and a rapidly growing population

**U**SING the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and France's "Farm to Fork" concept, it is important to make agricultural policies in Pakistan more progressive and accessible" Pakistan is the world's 26th largest economy and 6th most populous country, with a population of 180 million people. Pakistan has a GDP of 25% and is one of the best producers of wheat, cotton, sugarcane, mango, dates, rice, and oranges in the world. Poverty is a significant concern in Pakistan, with over 60% of the population living in poverty. Small landholdings, limited access to markets, a lack of access to capital, inputs, and support services, limited employment prospects, and restrictive policy initiatives in their agriculture institution are all challenges for rural farmers. Pakistan has socioeconomic, political, and health issues, as well as gender discrepancies and difference in literacy in both urban and rural populations. On the other hand if we see so, Pakistan's water resources are under severe strain due to high agricultural productivity and a rapidly growing population. Agriculture uses 90% of the country's water resources, while industry and home use share the remaining 10%.

Floods, earthquakes, landslides, draughts, and conflicts, such as the flood of 2010, which affected 20 million Pakistanis, are all common natural and man-made disasters in the country. Keeping in mind that Pakistan's entire problem stems from its terrible agricultural policies. Agriculture policy and mechanism proven to be a labor disrupting strategy that drove many poor farmers into urban slums. Inefficient agricultural management techniques are frequently identified as important issues that continue to restrict Pakistani agricultural productivity. Despite being a significant producer of wheat, rice, sugarcane, and cotton, rural parts of the country remain impoverished, and food insecurity is becoming a national problem. A large number of farmers in the country waste water by utilizing flood irrigation to cultivate crops like rice, and they have carelessly de-

stroyed subsurface groundwater by watering their crops with pumps. Such excessive water usage practices have laid vast tracts of land uncultivable due to water logging and salinity. We have climate change crises such as floods, draughts, and growing water scarcity. There is no technology to fix the threats posed by climate induced disasters. As a result, Pakistan's economic cooperation with France must be improved, both bilaterally and inside the European Union. We can improve agricultural manufacturing technologies across the country if we follow the European model for agriculture, just as France does, and implement the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) action plan and the "Farm to Fork" strategy. There should be High-level interactions between the two nations' leaders which can help us in strengthening bilateral ties more with France. In the future, Pakistan's Ministry of National Food Security and Research should adopt France's priority for CAP reforms for environmental ambition, which must be followed strategically, because France prefers to grow protein-rich crops by utilizing linked support and system maintenance, such as planting authorizations. It is vital to focus on rural poverty, to capture and make agricultural policies in Pakistan more progressive and accessible as in France. Subsidies and other incentives for poor farmers must be designed to encourage small farmers to participate actively in making agriculture more productive, flexible, and sustainable. It will help us in encouraging marginalized farmers to participate in rural development. If we follow France's common agricultural policy (CAP) agenda and establish partnerships with them with the objective of expanding and scaling up successful models and projects in Pakistan by developing all relevant sectors of agriculture, it will not only support Pakistan agriculture but also promote value chain-centered agriculture development. Such intensive growth strategies and projects will facilitate and promote value chain development in Pakistan.



## Briefs

## PM vows to address core challenges

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The previous government had badly failed," he remarked. The prime minister said though the cabinet formation faced a bit delay, yet it was done consisting of very competent and experienced members. He said the cabinet members would be briefed about the load-shedding and the factors behind it which would follow the decision making by the cabinet. He urged the cabinet to pay attention to the issues faced by the federating units particularly Balochistan. Re-counting the challenges, the prime minister said the country was under immense debt burden but it was upon the incumbent government to overcome the challenges despite having limited resources. "Today, we have to face the challenge collectively and should not evade any sacrifice. We will have to respond propaganda through facts, which would ultimately bury the lies," he remarked. Recalling the immense victimization of all opposition parties during the previous government, the prime minister said corruption was rampant during last three and half years. Citing the successful journey of development of Germany and Japan, the prime minister said despite being badly hit by the second world war, both the countries bounced back and achieved excellence just on the basis of their struggle. He also referred to the teachings of Holy Quran, Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as well as Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah advising the followers to put in their best to achieve excellence and change the fate.

## Pakistan values its...

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valued their contribution to national development and growth. The Prime Minister highlighted the serious human rights situation in IIOJK and stressed the importance of peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, enabling the region to realize its economic potential and promote social progress. He emphasized that a peaceful and stable South Asian region can focus on its growth and development. The Prime Minister emphasized that concerted efforts, at the global level, were needed to deal with the scourge of Islamophobia. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar thanked the Prime Minister and hoped that her visit to Pakistan would help strengthen ties between Pakistan and the US Congress. Appreciating her courage of convictions and her political struggle, the Prime Minister warmly welcomed her on her first-ever visit to Pakistan. The Prime Minister hoped that it would lead to deepen people-to-people ties and strengthen exchanges between the Parliament of Pakistan and the US Congress. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar is visiting Pakistan from 20-24 April. Apart from having meetings with leadership in Islamabad, she will visit Lahore and Azad Jammu and Kashmir to have greater understanding of Pakistan's cultural, social, political, and economic potential.

## Mariupol: No surrender as deadline expires

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In the ruins of Mariupol, site of the war's heaviest fighting and worst humanitarian catastrophe, Russia was hitting the last main Ukrainian stronghold, the Azovstal steel plant, with bunker-buster bombs, Kyiv said. Ukrainian officials have said women and children are trapped in bunkers under the plant. "The world watches the murder of children online and remains silent," presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter. Russia has been trying to take full control of Mariupol since the war's early days. Its capture would be a big strategic prize, linking territory held by pro-Russian separatists in the east with the Crimea region that Moscow annexed in 2014.



ISLAMABAD: US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar called on President Dr. Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr. – DNA

## Turkey determined to stand up for Al-Aqsa Mosque: Erdogan

Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital for their future state. "For Turkey, political and economic ties with Israel as necessitated by global and regional factors are separate from the cause for Jerusalem," Erdogan said

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Wednesday reiterated Turkey's determination to defend the rights of Palestinians as the people face oppression by Israeli forces in East Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine. "Turkey will never accept the oppression of Palestinians in Jerusalem and other regions in Palestine," Erdogan said at the parliamentary group meeting of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) in the capital Ankara. The president continued by clarifying that Turkey's political-economic relations with Israel are separate from the country's commitment to the Jerusalem cause and that Turkey will continue to defend the holy city and Al-Aqsa Mosque. Israel sees all of Jerusalem as its undivided capital – a status not recognized internationally. It captured East Jerusalem, the occupied West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 Six-Day War. Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital for their future state. "For Turkey, political and economic ties with Israel as necessitated by global and regional factors are separate from the cause for Jerusalem," Erdogan said. "It is clear that the way to effectively defend the Palestinian cause is to have a reasonable, logical, consistent and balanced relationship with Israel," he underlined. In recent days, Erdoğan has been conducting intense diplomatic traffic in order to stop Israel's attacks on occupied East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Within this context, Erdogan spoke with Palestinian President Mahmoud



Abbas, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Jordan's King Abdullah II and Israeli President Isaac Herzog. Emphasizing that the familiar images that emerge every year hurt not only consciences but cause legitimate reactions throughout the entire Islamic world, Erdogan made clear that Turkey will continue to work towards ensuring peace and tranquility in any case. Turkey has in the past launched various initiatives within the United Nations and Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) against Israeli actions towards Palestinian and its policies regarding East Jerusalem or its status. Al-Aqsa is the world's third-holiest site for Muslims. Jews call the area the "Temple Mount," claiming it was the site of two Jewish temples in ancient times. The holy site sacred to Jews and Muslims has often been the epicenter of Israeli-Palestinian unrest, and tensions were already heightened amid a recent wave of violence. Clashes at the site last year helped spark an 11-day war with Hamas militants in the Gaza Strip. Tensions this year have been heightened in part by the Islamic holy month of Ramadan coinciding with the Jewish celebration of Passover. Hundreds of Israeli settlers have stormed the flashpoint compound since last week under heavy police protection to celebrate the weeklong Jewish Passover holiday. The Israeli police, meanwhile, imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian youths to Al-Aqsa Mosque to perform the dawn prayer. Tension has mounted across the Palestinian territories since last week when Israeli forces raided the Al-Aqsa Mosque courtyards and attacked worshippers, injuring hundreds.

## Govt may increase deficit to Rs. 5,600 billion to discredit PTI: Shaukat Tarin

*On fiscal front, 9 month deficit is Rs 2.5 trillion or 3.9% of GDP. We were on track to contain deficit to 6.4% of GDP full year*

ISLAMABAD: Leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former finance minister Shaukat Tarin on Wednesday said that the incumbent government may increase the deficit to Rs. 5,600 billion to discredit PTI. According to details, the former finance minister Shaukat Tarin in his tweet pointed out that on fiscal front, nine month deficit is Rs 2.5 trillion or 3.9% of GDP. He further added that throughout the year, they were on track to contain deficit to 6.4% of GDP. The PTI leader was of the view that the PMLN led government could increase the deficit to harm PTI's reputation. In this regard he mentioned that the present government could increase the deficit to Rs. 5,600 billion to discredit PTI, adding that the present government may try to liquidate un-budgeted circular debt like 2013. "On fiscal front, 9 month deficit is Rs 2.5 trillion or 3.9% of GDP. We were on track to contain deficit to 6.4% of GDP full year. However, the present govt may try to liquidate un budgeted circular debt like 2013 to increase deficit to Rs 5,600 billion to discredit PTI," tweeted Shaukat Tarin. – DNA

## Government has decided to remove Ramiz Raja

KARACHI: The newly elected government under Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif has decided to remove Ramiz Raja from Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairmanship, a private sports channel reported. PM Shabbaz, who is also the Patron-in-Chief of PCB, is expected to nominate two names in Board of Governors for next chairman PCB. According to sources, former PCB chief Najam Sethi and Shakil Sheikh are likely to be nominated by the PM. However, Raja had called PCB staffers to tell them that he has got 'green signal' from the government to continue working. "I have been told to continue working as PCB chairman," Raja told PCB staffers. "We should now focus on work rather than thinking about what is going to happen," he said. – DNA

## Wimbledon to ban Russian, Belarusian tennis players

LONDON: Wimbledon, one of tennis' four Grand Slams, is set to bar Russian and Belarus players over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, according to The Times. A ban would mean men's tennis world No. 2 Daniil Medvedev could miss out on the season's third Grand Slam held in June-July. Russian and Belarusian players have been able to continue to compete in ATP and WTA events under a neutral flag since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. It was believed this would extend to the three remaining Grand Slam events – though the ITF banned both countries' teams from the Davis Cup and the Billie Jean King Cup. However, The Times says sources have told them that after almost two months of talks Wimbledon organizers

prefer to ban the players rather than adhere to a compromise solution offered by the British government. That would have seen the likes of Medvedev and last year's Wimbledon women's singles semifinalist Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus sign statements that they would not make supportive comments of Russian President Vladimir Putin or the war. Wimbledon organizers believe signing such statements could impact negatively on the families of the players. The BBC reported that confirmation of the decision is to come later Wednesday. The Kremlin reacted angrily to the reports, deeming a ban "unacceptable." "Once again they simply turn athletes into hostages to political prejudice, political intrigues," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov

told reporters. "This is unacceptable." "Taking into account that Russia is a very strong tennis country, our athletes are at the top of world rankings, the competition itself will suffer from their removal," he added. It is likely that this ban will apply to all British grass-court tournaments this summer. The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), which oversees key Wimbledon warm-up tournaments such as Queen's and Eastbourne, said last week they would follow Wimbledon's lead. "We think from a public perspective and indeed a practical implementation perspective that there needs to be alignment (between the All England Club and LTA), so it is really clear and understood," said LTA chief executive Scott Lloyd. – Agencies

## Govt to restore IMF programme; present...

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would not slide further while the markets would also perform well. He said the Pakistan Muslim League (N) had left growth rate at 6.1 percent which was reduced to 1.9 percent in first year of PTI government, negative one percent the following year and now this year the projection is 4 percent. Likewise, he added, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation has went up from 3.9 to 12.7 whereas the Sensitive Price Indicator has climbed up to 17.3 percent adding that the rural inflation has witnessed more hike than urban one, which is unusual. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said the Federal Cabinet had accorded approval for formation of a new committee which was mandated to furnish a report on overhauling the Exit Control List's (ECL) rules, allegedly misused by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government.

## Federal Govt has lost...

FROM PAGE 01

(PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif was elected as 23rd Prime Minister of Pakistan unopposed in a National Assembly session boycotted by former ruling party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. Panel of Chair member Ayaz Sadiq, who was chairing the session, announced that Mian Shehbaz Sharif received 174 votes while his opponent PTI's Shah Mahmood Qureshi received zero votes as PTI boycotted the session. Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri was chairing the session when it started but soon after PTI's prime minister candidate Shah Mahmood Qureshi's speech, the Deputy Speaker left and PTI MNAs announced not only to boycott the election of prime minister but also announced to resign from National Assembly.

## Tariq Fatemi appointed SAPM

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which has been given the portfolio of foreign ministry. Fatemi is a retired diplomat and has long association with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). He served as SAPM from 2013 to 2017 when he was removed from office as a result of the Dawn leaks inquiry. "The prime minister, in terms of rule 4(6) of the Rules of Business, 1973 read with serial no. 1A of Schedule VA of the said rules, has been pleased to appoint Syed Tariq Fatemi, as special assistant to the prime minister on foreign affairs, with immediate effect," reads a notification of his appointment. The development came a day after cabinet was sworn in ending an over week-long wait to complete the formation of the government of Shehbaz Sharif.

## British envoy, PM discuss...

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engagement with Bahrain and exploring the potential in trade, investment, IT, manpower, and food security sectors. The prime minister expressed these views in a meeting with Ambassador of Bahrain Mohammed Ebraheem Mohammed. Shehbaz appreciated the efforts of the government of Bahrain in looking after the Pakistani community during the testing times of the COVID-19 pandemic. He also welcomed the project of King Hamad Nursing University and Associated Medical Sciences Hospital in Islamabad, as a testament to the close brotherly relationship between the two countries. The ambassador conveyed the message of felicitations from the Bahraini leadership to Shehbaz Sharif on his assumption of the office of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. He recalled the long-standing and fraternal ties between the two countries and underlined Bahrain's desire to further deepen and broaden bilateral relations with Pakistan. – APP

## 'Sooner the better' - PSG hope to wrap up title

"For a long time I have said that winning the Champions League is a fundamental objective for Paris Saint-Germain so it will always be a big disappointment for the club if we don't win it," admitted Pochettino



League exit have decided to stay silent during remaining games this season. "For me it would be an immense source of joy to be involved in winning the club's 10th league title. "That should be a great source of motivation for everyone but we still need to go out and win it as soon as possible."

Despite their strong position in the league, the end of the season is proving to be something of an anti-climax for PSG after they

started the campaign by signing Messi and targeting Champions League glory. Having also exited the French Cup early, the Champions League collapse against Real Madrid in the last 16 in March left the Qatar-owned club with the sole remaining aim of reclaiming the domestic title they lost to Lille last season. Messi has contributed just three Ligue 1 goals and will play no part against Angers because of an inflamed Achilles tendon, PSG said. Meanwhile Neymar, who has belatedly come to life this season and has scored six times in the last three matches, will also be absent due to suspension. "For a long time I have said that winning the Champions League is a fundamental objective for Paris Saint-Germain so it will always be a big disappointment for the club if we don't win it," admitted Pochettino. His own future remains up in the air, with speculation linking him to Manchester United dying down now that Erik ten Hag is the favourite for the Old Trafford job. – Agencies



## Briefs

China's  
3-day  
Gwadar Iftar  
Program

ISLAMABAD: In the sacred month of Ramazan, a three-day Iftar reception is being organized for hundreds of local common people of Gwadar by the Chinese embassy in collaboration with Helping Hand Foundation Gwadar and China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) on Wednesday (today). According to Gwadar Pro, the Chinese Embassy wished the local people of Gwadar a very blissful Ramadan. COPHC is sponsoring the Iftar program which will last for three days - Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. More than 200 people of Gwadar belonging to the lower strata of society will be served at Iftar time daily for three days. Elaborate Iftar will include fresh water, drinks, traditional delights (sweet and salty), meals, and local dishes. A COPHC official said that under the CSR framework, COPHC is arranging the special Iftar receptions for Muslim residents of Gwadar, considering them brothers. "A few days back, COPHC also held an Iftar reception for local journalists and office bearers of Gwadar Press Club," he added. – DNA

Çavuşolu,  
Lavrov  
discuss  
Ukraine war

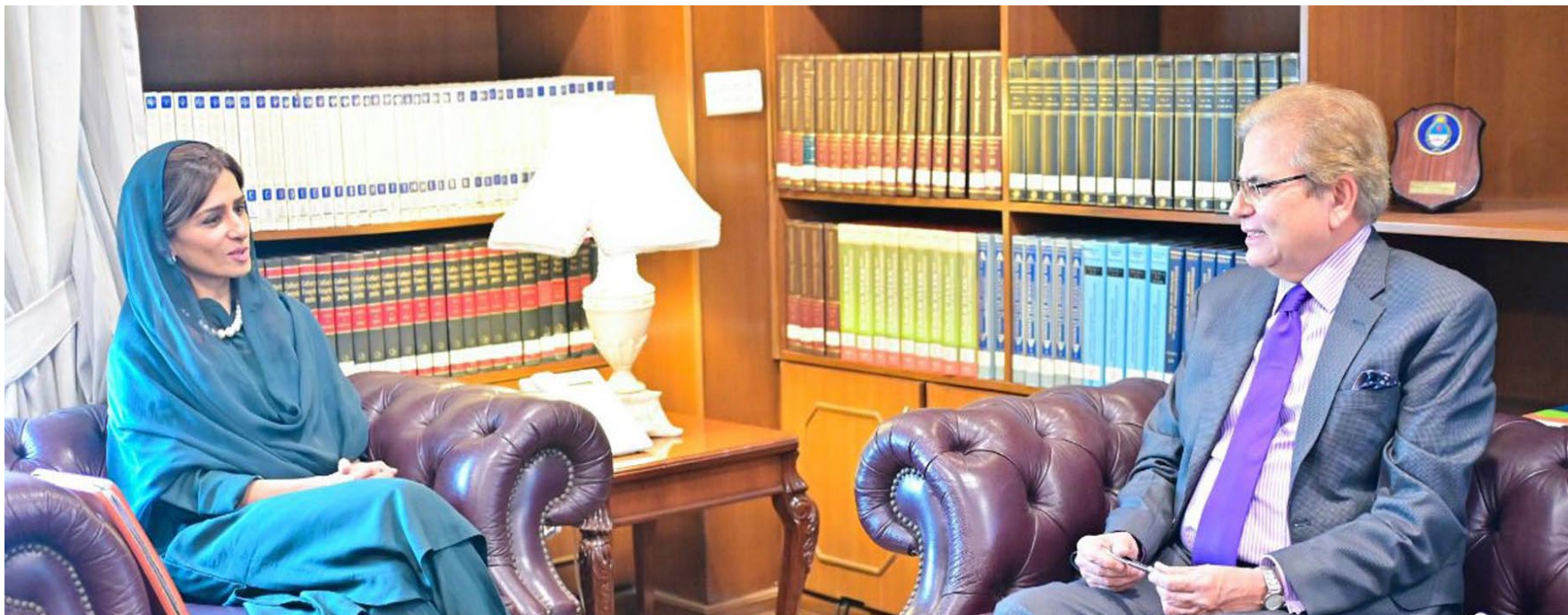
ANKARA: Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşolu and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on Wednesday held a phone call and discussed the latest situation in Ukraine. Turkey is one of the most active countries working to ensure a permanent cease-fire between Ukraine and Russia. Its delicately balanced act of assuming a role as a mediator by keeping communication channels with both warring sides open provides a glimmer of hope in diplomatic efforts to find a solution and achieve peace in the Ukraine crisis. With its unique position of having friendly relations with both Russia and Ukraine, Turkey has won widespread praise for its push to end the war. Since the beginning of the conflict, Ankara has offered to mediate between the two sides and host peace talks, underlining its support for Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. – APP

TRNC' leader  
accepts  
resignation  
of govt

ANKARA: Northern Cypriot President Ersin Tatar on Wednesday accepted the resignation of the government. According to Turkish News Agency-Cyprus (TAK), a statement was released about the government's resignation following a meeting between President Tatar and Prime Minister Faiz Sucuoglu. The coalition government of the National Unity Party (UBP), Rebirth Party (YDP), and Democrat Party (DP) was formed on Feb. 21 under the chairmanship of Sucuoglu, head of the UBP, and approved by Turkish Cypriot President Tatar. – Agencies

Italy chases  
African  
gas to end  
dependence  
on Russia

ROME: Italian ministers headed to central Africa Wednesday in an urgent quest for new energy deals as Italy scrambles to break away from Russian gas over the Ukraine war. Prime Minister Mario Draghi is looking to add Angola and the Congo Republic to a portfolio of suppliers to substitute Russia, which provides about 45 percent of Italian gas. "We do not want to depend on Russian gas any longer, because economic dependence must not become political subjection," he said in an interview with the Corriere della Sera daily published on Sunday. "Diversification is possible and can be implemented in a relatively short amount of time - quicker than we imagined just a month ago," he said. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Special envoy to Afghanistan, Mohammad Sadiq, called on Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. – DNA

Eleven new industrial units  
setting up in Rashakai SEZ

ISLAMABAD: Eleven enterprises are setting up industrial units in Rashakai Special Economic Zone, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. The development of Rashakai SEZ, commercially launched on 28th May 2021, is in progress steadily. Construction of industrial units is on the way including Century Steel, which is a Chinese-owned conglomerate and will be a state-of-the-art steel manufacturing facility. Besides, 11 enterprises have been allotted

land with an area of 42 acres to establish industrial units with an expected investment of Rs11.826 billion and 2,500 employment opportunities in the SEZ," Hassan Duad Butt, CEO of KP-BoIT stated in an interview with Gwadar Pro. He further added that the SEZ construction will last 6 to 7 years in 3 phases. Provision of electricity to the zone has also been planned in three phases. In Phase One, 10 Mw was provided in Sept 2020; in

Phase Two, 160 Mw will be provided, and 90% of work has been completed and in Phase Three, 50 Mw will be provided. The gas requirement of the zone is 30-Mmcfd which has also been approved by the Federal Government and the gas transmission line pipe-laying was completed in December 2021. Dr Hassan further introduced that the external road network including the provision of utilities is moving as per schedule as well. Chinese

state-owned enterprise China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) is actively involved in its marketing to develop the SEZ. The investment plan is focused on high-tech, export-led industries that can add value to the local natural resources and food industry. Rashakai SEZ is the flagship industrial project of GoKP under CPEC. The SEZ is ideally located on the M1 motorway and is spread over an area of more than 1000 acres. It is also called Gwadar of

the North as it connects Pakistan to neighbouring countries, presenting significant opportunities for both local and international companies to come and establish their industrial setups. "The location and management strategy makes it a suitable investment initiative. This coupled with the incentives and tax holidays give a suitable platform to invest and benefit from the zone," he emphasised. Hassan stated that the SEZ,

due to its ideal location and easy access to Afghanistan, can largely enhance Pak-Afghan trade volume with export-led manufacturing industrial units being established at the SEZ, which is currently US\$833.42 million. There is a large consumer market for fast-moving consumer products (food, beverages & dairy), light engineering products, and textile and garments that can be manufactured in Rashakai and exported to Afghanistan. – APP

500 Rohingya  
flee Malaysian  
detention center

KUALA LUMPUR: At least six Rohingya refugees were killed after more than 500 escaped from a detention center in Malaysia early on Wednesday. According to state news agency Bernama, 528 Rohingya detainees fled from the Sungai Bakap Immigration Detention Depot in Nibong Tebal, a town in Malaysia's northwestern Penang province. Six detainees – two men, two women, a boy and a girl – were killed while trying to cross a busy highway, said provincial police chief Mohamad Shuhaili Mohamad Zain. "There were 664 Rohingya detainees at the depot and 528 of them escaped ... We have managed to recapture 229 of them along the highway, while 88 others were caught earlier by villagers and Immigration Department personnel not far from the depot," he was quoted as saying. Efforts are underway to track down the re-

maining refugees, he added. Described by the UN as "the most persecuted minority in the world," the Rohingya faced a brutal military crackdown in Rakhine state in their home country of Myanmar in August 2017. Thousands of Rohingya have been killed by Myanmar forces, while more than 1 million have fled in successive waves of displacement since the 1990s, according to the UN refugee agency. Muslim-majority Malaysia is one of the countries in Southeast Asia hosting thousands of Rohingya refugees. Of the over 181,500 refugees and asylum-seekers in Malaysia as of this January, more than 155,600 were from Myanmar, including "some 103,560 Rohingyas, 22,580 Chins, and 29,470 other ethnic groups from conflict-affected areas or fleeing persecution in Myanmar," according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. – APP

Netflix rocked  
by subscriber loss

NEW YORK: Netflix Inc (NFLX.O) said inflation, the war in Ukraine and fierce competition contributed to a loss of subscribers for the first time in more than a decade and predicted deeper losses ahead, marking an abrupt shift in fortune for a streaming company that thrived during the pandemic. The company said it lost 200,000 subscribers in its first quarter, falling well short of its forecast of adding 2.5 million subscribers. Suspending service in Russia after the Ukraine invasion took a toll, resulting in the loss of 700,000 members. Wall Street sent Netflix's stock tumbling 26% after the bell on Tuesday and erased about \$40

billion of its stock market value. Since it warned in January of weak subscriber growth, the company has lost nearly half of its value. The lagging subscriber growth is prompting Netflix to contemplate offering a lower-priced version of the service with advertising, citing the success of similar offerings from rivals HBO Max and Disney+. "Those who have followed Netflix know that I've been against the complexity of advertising, and a big fan of the simplicity of subscription," said Netflix CEO Reed Hastings. Now, it appears the culprit is a combination of competition and the number of accounts sharing passwords, making it harder to grow. – Agencies

Uzbekistan elected as member  
of UNCTAD of ECOSOC

DNA

TASHKENT: Elections of members of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development for the period 2023-2026 were held at the UN headquarters in New York City as part of the annual meeting of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). During the event, Uzbekistan was unanimously elected by acclamation (universal approval) as a member of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development for 2023-2026. The Commission is a subsidiary body of the UN Economic and Social Council. It was established in 1992 to provide qualified advisory assistance to the General Assembly and the ECOSOC on topical scientific, technical, innovative and engineering issues in order to improve policy in this direction. The Commission plays an important role in developing recommendations and guidelines on science and technology within the UN com-

mon system. The commission consists of 43 countries elected by ECOSOC members. The Commission's secretariat is the Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), a key body of the General Assembly in the field of trade, finance, technology, investment and sustainable development. The members of the commission meet in the city of Geneva. Newly elected states, including Uzbekistan, will join the Commission from January 1, 2023. Giving our country the opportunity to participate in the work of this key UN body is a clear confirmation and recognition of the broad support of the international community for the consistent measures we are taking in the field of science and technology development. It also fully meets the call of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev on the importance of developing and implementing priority areas for the development of science and technology, taking into account the goals of socio-economic, socio-political development of our state and

the achievements of modern science. The active involvement of Uzbekistan in the activities of the Commission as its member will make it possible to become even more familiar with the accumulated experience and best practices in the development, planning and forecasting of the most important global trends in science, technology and innovation. This is especially important in the context of strengthening and maintaining the competitiveness of our country in the global economy and ensuring the sustainable development of our republic. Undoubtedly, as a member of the ECOSOC Commission, Uzbekistan will make its huge contribution to the work of this body. In turn, membership in this important structure will contribute to the accelerated implementation by Uzbekistan of the Agenda for the period up to 2030, attracting and introducing innovative solutions for scientific, technical, socio-economic development, as well as increasing the intellectual and technological potential of our state.



BAKU: Official dinner has been hosted on behalf of President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban Aliyeva in honor of President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov and his wife Aigul Japarova. – DNA

## Year of Shusha. Spectacular celebrations

BAKU: Spectacular events have been held in Baku within the Year of Shusha in Azerbaijan. The country's cultural capital turns 270 this year. President Ilham Aliyev signed an order declaring the city of Shusha as Azerbaijan's cultural capital in order to restore Shusha's historical appearance, bring its former glory to the city as well reunite it with the traditionally rich cultural life. The gala concert "Karabakh is Azerbaijan" at the International Mugham Center brought together the soloists of the International Mugham Center, Baku Choreographic Academy, People's artists Nuraddin Mehtikhanli, Anvar Sadikhov, Honored artists Sabuhi Ibayev, Ehtiram Huseynov, Tayyar Bayramov, Sevinj Sariyeva, Ilaha Afandiyeva and many others. The musicians captivated the audience with mugham music,



classical and instrumental works. The event was co-organized by the International Mugham Center, the Agency for State Support to NGOs and the Khan Shushinsky Foundation. Executive Director of the Agency for State Support to NGOs Aygun Aliyeva spoke about the fruitful activities of the state in restoring Azerbaijan's liberated territories and implementing

major projects. The audience was presented a video about the ten year activity of the Khan Shushinsky Foundation which aims at promoting the art of mugham. Famous fashion designer, Honored Art Worker Fakhriya Khalafova mesmerized the guests with her stunning collection titled "Kharibulbul in flourishing Karabakh. The elegant gowns were

harmoniously complemented by silk scarves, a restored version of the Karabakh kelayagi. The exhibition also included dresses from the fashion collection "Karabakh Princess" presented at Azerbaijan Fashion Week 2021. Sophisticated dress inspired by Azerbaijani poetess Agha Beyim Aga, a daughter of the second khan of Karabakh Ibrahim Khalil

khan, instantly won the hearts of fashionistas. Widespread among the peoples of the Middle East and the Caucasus, the silk headscarf varied in size and color. The older women wore a dark kelayagi, mostly black and dark blue, whereas younger women preferred the brighter ones, such as white, beige, etc. The most ancient and widespread kelayagi patterns were the image of the peacock pair, buta, flower motifs and geometric patterns. A distinctive feature of the Karabakh kelayagi was the symbol of the sun, an important symbol in many cultures. The fashion designer stressed that it's important to restore ancient patterns and to produce Karabakh kelayagi in a modern style. She expressed her confidence that kelayagi will be met with great interest by the world community at fashion events. – APP

Germany has  
not disclosed  
all weapons  
sent Ukraine

BERLIN: Berlin has chosen not to make public all the weapons it has sent to support Ukraine, Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said, adding that Germany would help Kyiv maintain more advanced weapons systems it might buy and train soldiers to use them. "We have delivered anti-tank missiles, Stingers and other things that we have never spoken about publicly so these deliveries could happen quickly," she said at a news conference in Riga with her Latvian counterpart. Asked whether Germany would be sending its Panzerhaubitze 2000 artillery system - which some experts say Ukraine needs to mount a counterattack against Russian forces in its Donbass region, she said Germany would train Kyiv's soldiers on using and maintaining more advanced systems which it might obtain from other allied countries or buy outright. – Reuters

Taiwan is  
part of China,  
Beijing  
tells US

HONG KONG: Taiwan is a part of China and no one can change that, Chinese Defense Minister Wei Fenghe said on Wednesday during a rare phone call with U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, according to a statement from Beijing. "If the Taiwan issue were not handled properly, it would have a damaging impact on Sino-U.S. relations," Wei added, according to statement published by the defence ministry. – APP

Israeli forces  
detain seven  
Palestinians

OCCUPIED PALESTINE: Israeli occupation forces on Wednesday at dawn detained at least seven Palestinian citizens during campaign of raids across several districts of the occupied West Bank. Local sources reported that Israeli forces broke into the city of Nablus and detained Amir Abu Riala from his home in the city's Balata refugee camp. The sources added that the Israeli forces also stormed a factory in the village of Kafr Qaleel, south of Nablus, and detained two Palestinian youths, named Khaleel Abu al-Su'oud and Osama Dweikat. In the same context, the Israeli forces broke into the town of Qibya, west of the city of Ramallah, and detained ex-detainee Ali Ghizan and took him to an unknown destiny. Moreover, the Israeli forces detained ex-detainee Mohammed Nidal from the city of Ramallah as well. In addition, the Israeli forces detained 39-year-old Fadi Omar from the city of Bethlehem, while detained ex-detainee Khalil al-Furukh from the town of Sair, east of the city of Hebron. – Agencies

1180 Israeli  
settlers break  
into Al-Aqsa  
mosque

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: 1180 Israeli colonial settlers broke into the Al-Aqsa mosque, protected by well-armed forces who attacked and chased Palestinian worshippers to clear the way for settlers, on Wednesday. To mark the fourth day of the so-called Passover holiday, Al-Qastal documented 1180 Israeli settlers broke into the Al-Aqsa mosque while being backed by well-armed forces who assaulted and blockaded Muslim worshippers inside prayer halls in an attempt to empty the holy site of its worshippers to secure the entry of the settlers. During the raid and in the aftermath of the attack, 1180 settlers stormed the holy site and performed provocative Talmudic rituals. They entered the mosque through the Al-Mughrabi Gate which is under full-Israeli control. This is the fifth raid and aggressive assault to be launched by the Israeli occupation forces since last Friday and for the fourth day in a row. Earlier on Friday, the forces broke into the holy site and brutally attacked the worshippers who gathered to perform the Al-Fajr prayer, injuring around 153 and arresting 400. – APP



## Briefs

PNS  
Shamsheer  
visits Bahrain

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship SHAMSHEER visited Port Mina Salman, Bahrain during deployment on Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP). The ship is patrolling in assigned areas and contributing towards international efforts to ensure maritime security in the region. Upon arrival at Port, the ship was warmly received by Naval & Air Attaché of Pakistan and Senior National representative of Pakistan, at HQ NAVCENT, Bahrain. During the stay at port, the Commanding Officer PNS SHAMSHEER Called on Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Forces, Commander Coast Guard Bahrain and Commander Combined Maritime Forces. During the interactions, matters of mutual interest were discussed and further enhancements of bilateral ties in all spheres were reaffirmed. Commanding Officer of PN Ship conveyed well wishes of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for the officers and men of Bahrain Naval Forces. During port visit, various professional exchange and orientation visits were arranged between PNS SHAMSHEER and Bahrain Defence Forces. Pakistan Navy believes in promoting peace and stability in the region and is committed to maritime security and order at sea.

Scholz  
under fire  
for hesitant  
Ukraine  
stance

BERLIN: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz was under growing pressure on Wednesday over his perceived lack of leadership over the war in Ukraine and his dogged refusal to send heavy weapons to the country. Almost two months after he responded to Russia's invasion of Ukraine by promising a "turning point" in German defence policy, critics say the chancellor has failed to take enough concrete action. Scholz has sent defensive weapons to Ukraine and announced extra military aid in recent weeks but has so far not agreed to directly send heavy weapons - leaving Germany increasingly out of step with European and NATO allies. "We believe that the Bundeswehr (Germany army) would be capable of supplying us with the weapons we need right now," Ukraine's ambassador to Germany, Andriy Melnyk, told the ZDF broadcaster on Wednesday. "We do not know why this is not happening." Army general Markus Laubenthal said the Bundeswehr was simply not in a position to send the weapons Ukraine wants, as this would "considerably weaken (Germany's own) defence capability". - Agencies

China  
opposes  
unilateral  
actions in  
Jerusalem

BEIJING: China on Wednesday expressed deep concern over escalating violence and conflict between Israel and Palestine, especially the tension in Jerusalem and opposed any unilateral attempt to alter the historical status quo of Jerusalem. China is deeply concerned with the escalating violence and conflict between Israel and Palestine, especially the tensions in Jerusalem, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said during his regular briefing. We oppose any unilateral attempt to alter the historical status quo of Jerusalem and hope relevant parties can stay calm, exercise restraint and prevent the situation from getting out of control, he added. He said that China holds that the Palestinian question should not be marginalized, still less forgotten, and the injustice lasting for over half a century should not continue. - APP

## OIP: Speakers discuss role of Central Bank in crisis

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Online Internship Program "Contemporary Dynamics of Indonesia" held its second part on the "Role of Central Bank in maintaining financial stability during the crisis". Ms. Anastuty Kusumawardhani, Chief Representative Bank of Indonesia, Singapore, and Dr. Amir Hussain, University of Peshawar were the speakers on the occasion. The Online Internship Program is being organized as a collaboration between the Indonesian Embassy and the University of Peshawar. The University of Peshawar is one of the Universities where the Indonesian Embassy intends to establish "Indonesian Corner" since it is the one of the oldest and prestigious university in Pakistan and also considered to be the mother university in the KPK province. Indonesian Ambassador Adam Tugio has described the OIP as prelude to the "Indonesian Corners" that the Embassy looks forward to establish at the leading Universities in Pakistan. According to Ambassador Adam Tugio the "Indonesian Corners" were intended to serve as the hub of academic and cultural activities to enhance linkages between the academia, artists and professionals of the two countries by way of organizing various programs such as language courses, online internship programs, seminars, festivals, sports events and other activities of common interest. At the session, the Guest Speaker from the Bank of Indonesia began her presentation with the history of the



Bank of Indonesia which is the Central Bank of Indonesia. She outlined the tasks, role, duties and functions of the bank and shared its vision and mission with the audience. Ms. Anastuty Kusumawardhani said that Covid-19 placed the Indonesian economy under enormous pressure in 2020, with sources of turbulence unlike anything before. The immediate Government response to curb the spread of Covid-19 through imposition of large-scale social restric-

tions, inevitably weighed on economic performance. Policies aimed at containing the spread of Covid-19, led to reduced personal mobility and a drop in spending on goods and services. She said that the consumption, investment, transportation, tourism, production and the confidence of economic agents fell significantly, resulting in a sharp drop in economic growth. Policy synergies pursued by the Government, Bank Indonesia and relevant

authorities sought to mitigate the extraordinary impact of Covid-19 and worked continually to build optimism for economic recovery. The BI representative shared the salient features of the National Economic Recovery Program which provided coordination and synergy among the Government, Bank Indonesia and other relevant Institutions and banks. She said that the national economic recovery program protected the consumption and purchasing power of the poor and vulnerable, funding for small and medium enterprises, tax incentives for businesses, the establishment of projects to absorb labor, and credit restructuring. The Indonesian Speaker said that against a background of low inflation, Bank Indonesia pursued an accommodative policy mix by providing a monetary stimulus through repeated interest rate cuts and large-scale quantitative easing. This policy was supported by measures to stabilize the rupiah, relaxation of macro prudential policies and digitalization of the payment system. She said that the Indonesia's national economy in the second quarter of 2021 moved into positive territory for the first time since the Covid-19 outbreak at the beginning of 2020, achieving 7.07% (yoy) growth. Moving forward, she said that the Bank Indonesia projects national economic growth in Indonesia in 2022 in the 4.7-5.5% range, up from 3.2-4.0% in 2021, driven by ongoing economic improvements that are driving solid export performance, coupled with growing domestic demand in terms of consumption and investment. This is supported by a fast-

er vaccination rollout, reopening of economic sectors and policy stimuli. The Speaker stated that the Bank of Indonesia policy mix in 2022 will remain synergized as part of the national economic policy direction to accelerate recovery while maintaining economic stability. She said that the inflation will remain under control within the 3.0%-1% target corridor in 2022 and the current account deficit will remain low and manageable in the 1.1-1.9% range in 2022 and added that the digital economy and finance will also expand quickly and significantly. She informed that the policy mix comprised five salient policy instruments that included Monetary Policy, Macroeconomic Policy, Payment System Policy, Financial Market Deepening Policy, MSME Policy and the Sharia Economy and Finance. She concluded that Indonesia had strong financial foundations but the Government continue to address several risks including commodity price volatility, inflation, disruption of supply chain, and the emerging geopolitical dynamics such as Russia-Ukraine Conflict and the rising oil prices that were hampering global economic recovery. Dr. Amir Hussain, Assistant Professor, Institute of Management Sciences, University of Peshawar while speaking on the occasion said that Pakistan central bank faced the similar challenges like Indonesia and divided Pakistan's financial crisis in the Pre COVID-19, during the COVID-19 and Post COVID-19 categories and provided details about how the Government and the central bank played its role in managing the crisis.

IHC seeks  
details of gifts  
received by  
ex-PM Khan

USMAN CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered the federal government on Wednesday to make public the details of gifts received by former prime minister Imran Khan during his time as the premier. Hearing a petition challenging the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government's decision to keep the details of these gifts secret, the IHC ordered the federal government to submit its response within two weeks. The IHC also said that the information regarding the gifts should be shared with the petitioner since there was no stay order regarding making the information about these gifts public. The IHC remarked that there should not be any policy of buying these state gifts after paying a meagre sum. "Such a policy means that these gifts are on sale," the judge added. According to Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb, the gifts given to the government officials by the foreign governments belong to the state of Pakistan not some individuals. "These gifts are not meant for taking home," he said, adding that these gifts should be recovered if someone had taken them home. "Individuals come and go but the office of the prime minister of Pakistan is permanent," the IHC judge added. Justice Aurangzeb said if there was a need for constitutional interpretation regarding these gifts then the IHC was willing to help. The deputy attorney general asked the high court for more time because of the new government.

Le Pen, Macron prepare for  
crunch French presidency duel

NEWS DESK

PARIS: Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen prepared Wednesday for their one-off televised debate four days ahead of France's presidential elections, seeking to sway millions of voters who are still undecided. France in Sunday's second round runoff faces a stark choice between the centrist president Macron and the anti-immigration Le Pen who will seek to become the country's first far right head of state in an outcome that would send shockwaves around Europe. Macron is favourite to win the runoff, with most polls showing an advantage of over 10 percent, and become the first French president to win a second term since Jacques Chirac in 2002. But analysts and allies of the president have warned the result is far from a foregone conclusion, with polls indicating over 10 percent of French who intend to cast their ballots have yet to decide who to vote for. The incumbent and his rival will trade blows starting at 9:00 pm (1900 GMT), in a rematch of their 2017 face-off that was widely seen as disastrous for Le Pen and contributing to Macron's easy eventual victory. This time, the scenario is different - Macron



is no longer an upstart but the incumbent president with a five year record to defend while Le Pen has sought to soften her image and present her far right party as a mainstream force. Both candidates have their eyes on voters who backed third-placed hard-left candidate Jean-Luc Melechon in the first round. He has refused to urge his supporters to vote for Macron in order to keep Le Pen out of the Elysee Palace. Looking ahead to parliamentary elections in June, often deemed the "third round" in France's electoral system, Melechon on Tuesday called for a left-wing alliance that would deny either Macron or Le

Pen a majority and potentially set him up as prime minister. "I will be prime minister, not because Macron or Le Pen want it, but because the French will have elected me," he told BFM television. The latest poll by Ipsos/Sopra Steria published Wednesday predicted a solid margin of victory for Macron on 56 percent to 44 for Le Pen. But Macron's allies have warned him against complacency, not least faced with Le Pen's persistent attacks against the former investment banker as an aloof "president of the rich," out of touch with workaday concerns at a time of rising inflation and insecurity.

Finnish MPs open  
debate on joining NATO

HELSINKI: Finland's parliament Wednesday will open a debate on whether to seek NATO membership, after Russia's invasion of Ukraine sparked a surge in political and public support for joining the military alliance. Despite Russia warning of a nuclear build-up in the Baltic should Finland and neighbouring Sweden join the military alliance, Finland's prime minister said that her country would now decide quickly on whether to apply for membership. "I think it will happen quite fast. Within weeks, not within months," Prime Minister Sanna Marin said last week. Sweden is also discussing whether to submit a membership bid following Russia's February 24 invasion. The 200 MPs in Finland's Eduskunta last week received a government-commissioned "white paper" that assessed the implications of NATO membership alongside other security options, such as increased bilateral defence agreements. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: US Congresswoman Ilhan Omar posing for a photo after meeting PTI Chairman Imran Khan. Shireen Mazari and Shah Mehmood Qureshi are also present on the occasion. - DNA

## Sanjrani for expanding trade ties with China

ISLAMABAD: Ms Pang Chunxue, Deputy Head of Mission Chinese Embassy called on the Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at the Parliament House on Wednesday. Issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations and CPEC projects were discussed during the meeting. The Chairman Senate said that Pakistan attaches great importance to the role of China in global and regional affairs. During the meeting it was agreed to further enhance the bilateral relations. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said that the government of Pakistan is keen to further expand economic ties with China. "Multilateral partnership between Pakistan and China is an important aspect of Pakistan's foreign policy" emphasized Chairman Senate. He said that both the countries have always supported each others position at international forums on important issues and Pak-China friendship is embedded in the hearts of the people of both the countries. The Senate Chairman said that Chinese investment in industrialization, agriculture and digital technologies needs to be further enhanced. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani said that CPEC would prove



to be a game changer for the region which would usher in a new era of development. The Deputy Head of Mission Chinese Em-

bassy appreciated Pakistan's efforts for regional peace and stability and expressed satisfaction over the progress on CPEC.

Ms Pang Chunxue assured to play her role in further enhancing diplomatic relations with Pakistan at all levels. - APP

Tahir Rai  
appointed  
new FIA  
director  
general

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Tahir Rai, a Police Service of Pakistan (PSP) officer, has been appointed as the new director general of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb shared the details of the appointment during media interaction in a post-cabinet meeting press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday. She said that federal cabinet led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif gave approval to the appointment of the new DG FIA. Tahir Rai has previously served as newly posted Inspector General (IG) Police Balochistan and other postings. Earlier in the day, Federal Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan assumed the charge of his ministry in Islamabad. Rana Sanaullah is the 46th interior minister of Pakistan. In a tweet, he said that the wrong policies of the previous government have 'destroyed' all national institutions. "The present government will fulfill all its promises and run the affairs of the country in a better way in accordance with the Constitution. This government is well aware of the problems of the people and is making all possible efforts to solve them on priority basis," he said.

Russia tests  
nuclear-  
capable  
ballistic  
missile

MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday it had test-launched its Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile, a new addition to its nuclear arsenal which President Vladimir Putin said would give Moscow's enemies something to think about. Putin was shown on television being told by the military that the missile had been launched from Plesetsk in the country's northwest and hit targets in the Kamchatka peninsula in the far east. "The new complex has the highest tactical and technical characteristics and is capable of overcoming all modern means of anti-missile defence. It has no analogues in the world and won't have for a long time to come," Putin said. "This truly unique weapon will strengthen the combat potential of our armed forces, reliably ensure Russia's security from external threats and provide food for thought for those who, in the heat of frenzied aggressive rhetoric, try to threaten our country." - APP