



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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United States, Pakistan expand green energy, improve power supply

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Armenia must sign treaty for better future

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French actor Jacques Perrin dies aged 80

Detailed News On Page-07



NSC: No foreign conspiracy found

Chaired by PM, the meeting was attended by the services chiefs and federal ministers



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The National Security Committee (NSC) Friday ruled out a foreign conspiracy behind the ouster of the PTI-led government in a setback to ex-prime minister Imran Khan's narrative of a "regime change conspiracy". Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired today's NSC meeting, and according to a statement from the PM Office, the telegram received from the Pakistan Embassy in Washington was discussed in detail. Former Pakistani ambassador to Washington Dr Asad Majeed Khan briefed the meeting about the context of his diplomatic cable — that carried the alleged threat sent to the PTI government last month by US officials. "The NSC, after examining the contents of the communication, reaffirmed the decision of the last

NSC meeting. The NSC was again informed by the premier security agencies that they have found no evidence of any conspiracy." "Therefore, the NSC, after reviewing the contents of the communication, the assessment received, and the conclusions presented by the security agencies, concludes that there has been no foreign conspiracy." The meeting was attended by the services chiefs and federal ministers. The PTI has claimed that the Imran Khan government was toppled because of the independent foreign policy and most recently due to the PM's Russian visit. The US had rejected the allegations and said there was no truth in them. Not only this, but DG ISPR Major General Babar Iftikhar had also rejected the perception of a foreign conspiracy behind the no-trust motion.

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US distances itself from Ilhan Omar's visit

MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: United States Congresswoman Ilhan Omar's current travel to Pakistan is not sponsored by the U.S. government, State Department Spokesman Ned Price said Thursday. "As I understand it, Representative Omar is not visiting Pakistan on US government sponsored travel," he told reporters at his daily news briefing in response to a question from a Pakistani reporter. "So I'd need to refer you to her office for questions on her travel," Price added. Ms. Omar, a Democrat, arrived in Islamabad earlier this week on a visit to Pakistan, and will stay till April 24. On Wednesday, the American lawmaker met President Dr Arif Alvi, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar. She also met former Prime Minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan. However, her meeting with Imran Khan generated controversy as the ex-premier has been claiming that a US-backed conspiracy was behind his government's ouster. Washington has firmly denied his claims.

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ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Malki calls on Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. DNA

Israeli Police injure 31 Palestinians

Since March Israeli forces have killed at least 29 Palestinians in West Bank raids

NEWS DESK

JERUSALEM: At least 31 Palestinians were injured in clashes with Israeli police at Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem on Friday, Palestinian medics said, the latest outbreak in a recent upsurge of violence at a site revered by Muslims and Jews alike. The Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance service said 14 Palestinians had been taken to hospital, two with serious injuries. Israeli police said its forces intervened when hundreds of people began hurling rocks and fireworks and drew close to the Western Wall, where Jewish worship was underway. Reuters witnesses said police entered the compound after the morning prayers and fired rubber-tipped bullets and stun grenades at a crowd of about 200 Palestinians, some of whom were throwing rocks. Police also fired rubber-tipped bullets from a close range at a group of journalists documenting the clashes, the witnesses said. An upsurge of violence in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories in recent weeks has raised fears of a relapse into a broader conflict, like last year's Gaza war. Since March Israeli forces have killed at least 29 Palestinians in West Bank raids, the Palestinian health ministry said, and a series of deadly Arab street attacks have killed 14 people in Israel, Israeli police and medics said. Last Friday, more than 150 Palestinians and several Israeli police officers were injured in similar clashes at Al-Aqsa, Palestinian medics and Israeli police said. The conduct of Israeli security forces that day "raises serious concerns that the use of force was widespread, unnecessary and indiscriminate," a spokesperson for the UN HC Human Rights said in a statement.

PM, President EU discuss trade, investment ties

President of European Commission felicitated Shehbaz Sharif on assuming the PM office



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received a telephone call from President of the European Commission Ms. Ursula von der Leyen here on Friday and discussed matters of mutual interest. The President of the European Commission congratulated Shehbaz Sharif on assuming the office of Prime Minister and underlined the Commission's desire to further strengthen its bilateral relationship with Pakistan. The Prime Minister expressed his thanks for the felicitations and stated that Pakistan greatly valued its relations with the European Union, which were based on shared values and common objectives of peace, prosperity

and development. The Prime Minister highlighted the importance of closer trade and investment ties between Pakistan and EU. He appreciated the GSP Plus arrangement and underlined that, being a mutually beneficial scheme, it had played an important role in expansion of Pakistan-EU trade. The Prime Minister lauded Ms. Ursula von der Leyen's stewardship of the EU Commission and underscored his resolve to further deepen mutual engagement. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also extended a cordial invitation to the European Commission President. The two leaders agreed to stay in contact and work together to expand Pakistan-EU relations, intensify investment and trade cooperation, and enhance mutual cooperation between the two sides in diverse fields.

Briefs

Elections after govt completes term

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said that general elections would be held after the government completes its term, as she excoriated former prime minister Imran Khan and his governance. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad, she said, "And when the elections are held this time, the mistake of the RTS's (Results Transmission System) failure will not happen again, Imran Khan sahib. The minister claimed that people had "learned from their mistake" and would not vote for Imran Khan again, adding that they had realised that he was a "liar and a hypocrite".

Russia-Ukraine talks stalled

DNA

MOSCOW: Talks between Moscow and Kyiv to put an end to Russia's near two-month military campaign in pro-Western Ukraine have stalled, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday. "They (negotiations) have stalled now," he said after talks with his Kazakh counterpart in Moscow, adding that Russia has still had not received an answer to a latest proposal sent around five days ago.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

President Alvi's representative must take CM oath: LHC

The order was given by LHC Chief Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti on a plea filed by chief minister-elect Hamza Shahbaz

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Following Punjab Governor Omar Sarfaraz Cheema's refusal to administer the oath to CM-elect Hamza Shahbaz, the Lahore High Court on Friday directed President Arif Alvi to appoint a different representative to administer the oath to the PML-N leader. The order was given by LHC Chief Justice Muhammad Ameer Bhatti on a plea filed by chief minister-elect Hamza Shahbaz against the Punjab governor for not fulfilling his constitutional duty. Before issuing the directives to the president, LHC had asked the governor to present the reasons for not giving the oath in writing by 2pm. When the hearing resumed, LHC CJ Bhatti shared that the governor had excused himself from administering the oath to the CM-elect. At this, he said that this leads to the question of what the court will have to decide. On the other hand, PML-N's counsel Ashtar Ausaf Ali told the judge that the governor was not saying that he is not available but was refusing to administer the oath.

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President Alvi administers oath to 4 new ministers

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administered oath to three federal ministers and one minister of state for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's cabinet at the Awan-i-Sadr on Friday, the first time the president led the ceremony involving members of the new government. The president had previously "complained of discomfort" just a day before then prime minister-elect Shehbaz was to be sworn in as head of government. Shehbaz was then administered the oath of office by Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjrani. In Friday's oath-taking ceremony, Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid's (PML-Q) Chaudhry Salik Hussain — son of Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain —

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Explosion at Afghan mosque kills dozens of people

Latest attack at a mosque outside Kunduz city in northern Afghanistan kills 33 people

NEWS DESK

KABUL: An explosion tore through a mosque near the northern Afghan city of Kunduz on Friday killing at least 33 people and wounding dozens of others. "The blast occurred at a mosque in Imam Sahib district of Kunduz killing 33 civilians including children," Information Minister Zabihullah Mujahid said on Twitter, adding another 43 people were wounded. "We condemn this crime ... and express our deepest condolences to the victims," said Mujahid. It was not clear who was behind the attack, which came after several blasts claimed by the armed group ISIL (ISIS) rocked Afghanistan, in-

Pakistan concerned over terrorist attacks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan expresses deep concern over the recent spate of terrorist attacks in various parts of Afghanistan over the last few days. A statement from Foreign Office said that the heinous attacks include bomb blasts at mosques in Mazar-e-Sharif and IED blasts in Kabul, Jalalabad and other places yesterday.

Continued on Page 06

cluding one in Kunduz and another on a Shia mosque in Mazar-i-Sharif, the previous day. The deadliest of three bombings on Thursday exploded inside a Shia mosque in northern Mazar-i-Sharif with at least 12 people killed and as many as 40 wounded. Earlier Thursday, a roadside bomb exploded near a boys school in the Afghan capital of Kabul, injuring two children in the city's predominantly Shia neighbourhood of Dasht-e-Barchi. A third bomb in Kunduz wounded 11 mechanics working for the country's Taliban rulers. Since sweeping to power last August, the Taliban has been battling an ISIL affiliate known as Islamic State in Khorasan Province, which is proving to be an intractable security challenge.

Pushtoons left at mercy of religious hardliners

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Whatever might be claims and justifications on the part of Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif it is the fact that nationalist, progressive and moderate Pushtoons are lacking representation in the federal cabinet. And the vacuum erupted with lacking of due representation to nationalists and progressive minded Pushtoon leadership in the federal government, will be definitely filled by no other than Jamiat Ul Ulema Islam (F) which is now defending Talibanisation not only across the border in Afghanistan but also in the region.

Awami National Party is considered most effective in both Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan has only one MNA in National Assembly and its leadership regretted representation in the federal cabinet at own. Whereas Independent MNA Mohsin Dawar's induction in the cabinet was opposed by powerful military establishment. Another independent MNA Ali Wazir is in Jail, facing treason charges. Both Ali and Mohsin were leaders of Pushtoon Tahafuz Movement but now they seems disintegrated when Mohsin constituted own party with name of National Democratic Movement.

Though the previous Imran Khan regime was dominated by Pushtoons but most of them was lacking minds to address the genuine issues and expectations of Pushtoons. On one side, Imran Khan had monopolized almost policies and decisions whereas on the other these former federal ministers along with Speaker and Deputy Speak-

er remains voiceless before the powerful military establishment which didn't allow others interfere in administrative, security and even development matters of Pushtoons dominated areas due to its "interests or stakes across the border in Afghanistan."

Till August 15th 2021, the situation remained very friendly for Pushtoon nationalists and democrats and unfriendly for military establishment and religious hardliners. But now all matters took ugly turns as Pakistan's powerful military establishment succeeded in empowering of its loyal Taliban across the border in Afghanistan. And reasonable religious hardliners from all over Pakistan in general and Pushtoons dominated areas in particular are not only politically supporting and defending Talibanisation in Afghanistan but thousands of youngsters are playing key role in implementation of Afghan Taliban's doctrine of Islam. Still the youngsters either on completion of education or on leaves from seminars having the first choice to serve in ranks of Taliban across the border in Afghanistan.

The new federal cabinet of Mian Shahbaz Sharif comprising at least four ministers from fellow JUI(F) and an advisor from PML(N). Whereas the second higher post parliament, Deputy Speaker of National Assembly also gifted to JUI(F). Structure of federal government confirms at least third higher space to JUI (F) of Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman-known for a "visible shift in policies towards powerful military establishment and Afghanistan after mysterious assassination (November 2nd 2018 at Islamabad) of Maulana Sami Ul

Haq chief of his faction JUI(S). Though Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman and his aides disagree but events confirm that they are now supporting Taliban. Earlier in 90's Maulana Fazal Ur Rahman or his party never backed Talibanisation in Afghanistan.

The growing influence of Taliban in Afghanistan or Talibanisation in the region is a serious threat to the future peace, stability, progress and prosperity of Pushtoons throughout Pakistan. Compare to Punjab, Sindh and Baluch, the trend if religious extremism is on rise amongst the Pushtoons dominated areas. Recently held elections since 2013 confirms that compare to progressive, democratic and moderate Pushtoons, the strength hardliners winner is on highest. Instead of highlighting the genuine socio-political, economic, administrative and security issues of Pushtoons, these religious minded MP's always confined them to advocacy of religious extremism in parliament proceedings. Similar was the position of PTI MP's who in last around four years, said nothing expect endorsing accusations and allegations of deposed Prime Minister Imran Khan against his political rivals.

Lacking of representation to genuine Pushtoons is now heated topic for debate amongst the socio-political circles throughout the country. It is likely to lead to integration some of the political parties and groups for contesting jointly coming general elections. Besides others, some circles are making reconciliation between the families of Wali Khan and Aftab Sherpao considered staunch rivals since 1975 last. Likewise certain smaller factions are also



ISLAMABAD: General Lucky Eluonye Onyenuchea Irabor, Chief of Defence Staff Nigerian Armed Forces calls on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force. – DNA

Foolproof security for Yaum-e-Ali (RA) in Gujrat

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: DPO Umer Salamat and Additional Deputy Commissioner General Afzal Hayat Tarar said that all facilities including foolproof security would be provided to the participants of meetings and processions on the occasion of Hazrat Ali's martyrdom today (21st Ramadan). These views were expressed by them while addressing a meeting of the district peace committee. ADC (G) Mr. Tarar said, "Maintaining an atmosphere of unity among Muslims in the district with the help of religious scholars is the top priority of district administration." Sahibzada Saeed Ahmad Shah Gujrati, Qari Altaf-ur-Rehman, Altaf Kazmi, Hakeem Jawad-ur-Rehman Nizami, social ac-

tivist Khadim Ali Khadim, Munawar Khokhar, Lala Saeed Ahmed were also present on the occasion. He further said, "Gujrat district is exemplary in terms of religious harmony and brotherhood. The scholars here have always played an exemplary role in maintaining the unity among the Muslims of all sects. The district administration and the police are hopeful that the scholars will continue to discharge their responsibilities with passion." DPO Umer Salamat said, "As per the directions of Punjab government, the district police are fully vigilant in discharging their duties. A comprehensive plan has been drawn up for the security of Majalis and procession routes. Officers and men have been assigned duties while I, myself will be present in the field and will

oversee all arrangements. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Afzal Hayat Tarar told that a control room had been set up in the Deputy Commissioner Complex to monitor the processions of Yaum-e-Shahadat-e-Ali (RA). The Health Department has also been directed to remain on full alert. Similar instructions have also been issued to Metropolitan Corporation, District Council and CO units. He said that Rescue 1122 and Civil Defense teams would also be on alert to get out of any emergency situation. The participants of meeting vowed that the Ulema and members of the Peace Committee would continue to play their role in maintaining the atmosphere of religious harmony in Gujrat with the assistance of the government and the district administration.



ISLAMABAD: Employees of private banks protesting at D-Chowk Islamabad against Saturday as working day. – DNA

Mahrugh scores 73rd position in CSS exams

ANWAR CHOCHAN



KHARIAN: Mahrugh Chauhan, a 23-year-old girl from Kharian Tehsil, Gujrat District, Pakistan, has scored 73rd position in the CSS exams this year. And she has been allotted CSS (50 Common) Pakistan Customs Service Group. Mahrugh Chauhan has also set a unique record that she is not only the youngest person to pass the CSS exam this year in the history of Pakistan Customs Service but also so far in the history of Pakistan Customs Service Group. She made her debut at the age of just 23, without joining any academy. Mahrugh Chauhan is the daughter of former Pakistan Army Major (Retd.) Muhammad Akhtar Abid Chauhan and currently resides in Bahawalpur.

UAF celebrates International Earth Day

"The country is blessed with four seasons, fertilize land and water resource but we are polluting these resources that is a matter of concern"

FAISALABAD: The University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan on Friday urged to step-up efforts to fight environmental hazards, preserve the nature and save the world from the devastating effects of climate changes.

He was addressing the participants of a walk organized by the Institute of Soil and Environmental Sciences to mark Earth Day. The walk commenced from the Institute and ended at University Clock Tower.

Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that humans are deteriorating the environment from their own hands in term of irrational usage of natural resources, deforest-

ation and pollution, resulting in changing climate that have pushed the world into many disasters. He said, "The country is blessed with four seasons, fertilize land and water resource but we are polluting these resources that is a matter of concern." He said it is the need of hour to sensitize the people about the environmental issues. He said, "We have to create public momentum to mitigate greenhouse emissions, soil degradation, water wastage and pollution, and increase tree cover. He said young generation should also be encouraged to participate actively through awareness campaigns, discussions, and plantation campaign. – APP

Shopkeepers fined on profiteering

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Price control magistrates have imposed fine of Rs.169,000 on 80 shopkeepers on charge of profiteering in the district during past 24 hours. A spokesman of the local administration said on Friday that price control magistrates inspected 1324 shops in different markets of Faisalabad and found 80 shopkeepers involved in profiteering and overcharging. Therefore, the magistrates imposed a total fine of Rs.169,000 on them and warned that they would be sent behind bars if they did not mend their way of profiteering, he added.

FESCO staff must work hard: CEO

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Approval of bonus by the Board of Directors (BODs) for the officers and officials of the company is the result of their excellent performance, achievement of recovery & line losses targets, maintenance of the system despite the outbreak of corona pandemic & shortage of staff and improvement in the customer services said, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) Engineer Bashir Ahmed, He was addressing a delegation of WAPDA Hydroelectric Central Labor Union at FESCO Headquarters here today.

He said that Chairman and Board members expect from FESCO staff to work harder and more diligently to take the company at top position. He added that provision of excellent services to the customers is top priority of the FESCO Board and company management and they have taken concrete and comprehensive measures to ensure uninterrupted power supply to consumers. Customer services have been modernized, online application system introduced for new electricity connections, billing accuracy, extension of their dates, etc have been computerized and a paperless environment is being pro-

moted in Customer Care centers while employees problems are being solved and facilities are being provided to them. General Secretary Hydro Union Chaudhry Sarfraz Handal thanked the Board members and the Chief Executive Officer for the approval of the bonus and 15% disparity allowance and assured them that all they would utilize their conscientious efforts to further improve the customer service. Director General (HR&A) Nasar Hayat Maken, Director Legal & Labor Farrukh Aftab, Director (PR) Tahir Sheikh and Deputy Director (Admin) Mehmood Ahmed were also present at this occasion.

'Reformation led Martin Luther to challenge Church'

ISLAMABAD: Martin Luther King challenged the church hierarchy of his day, calling Christians back to the Bible and to salvation through faith alone, said Prof Emeritus Aslam Syed on Friday. The European Reformation was a major movement within 16th-century Europe that posed a religious and political challenge to the Catholic Church and in particular to papal authority, arising from what were perceived to be errors, abuses, and discrepancies by the Catholic Church, the guest speaker viewed at a Webinar on Discourse of History on European History From Antiquity to Modernity VIII here. Prof. Emeritus Aslam Syed has been serving the Centre for Religious Studies, Ruhr Universität, Bochum,

Germany. He remained Chairman, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and also served the NIHCR as its Director. Responding to a question, he said that the Reformation was the start of Protestantism and the split of the Western Church into Protestantism and what is now the Roman Catholic Church. It is also considered to be one of the events that signify the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the early modern period in Europe. The Webinar arranged online by the National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR), Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, was attended by a large number of participants from all across the world ranging from stu-

dents, teachers and researchers to have greater insights into the valuable views of the guest speaker. Replying a question, Prof Syed said that Martin Luther King publicly protested the exploitation of the poor. Luther's objections to the Catholic Church's teachings on justification to how people are saved came to a head over indulgences. At the time, indulgences could be purchased to grant remission of penalties for sins. Indulgences became a means of widespread economic exploitation, preying on the poor's fear of punishment in the afterlife, he said. It was the 42nd consecutive session on the Discourse of History, a brainchild of the NIHCR Director Dr Sajid Mahmood Awan. – APP

Commissioner Multan division pays visit to Lodhran

OUR CORRESPONDENT

LODHRAN: Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmed paid a surprise visit to Lodhran district to monitor Ramadan bazaar. On the occasion, Commissioner Multan reviewed the quality, availability and sale of food items provided in Ramadan bazaars at fixed prices. Ensuring supply at rates.

He said that price control magistrates should work hard to spread the fruits of government policies to the people. He said that 10 kg bag of flour is available at Rs 400. He said that 13 items were subsidized at Fair Price Shops. He said that the price of 10 kg bag of flour has been reduced from Rs. 550 to Rs. 400. It has been directed to fix. 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, tomatoes, eggs, chicken, mutton, beef, rice, ghee and oil in Ramadan bazaars. Commissioner Multan said that demand and supply of flour, sugar and ghee is being monitored specially. He said that strict monitoring of food items is being carried out in the open market and stockpiling in the month of Ramadan is being dealt with with an iron fist. He also urged the district administration to further improve the facilities in Ramadan bazaars. Meanwhile, Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmed also visited the Wheat Procurement Center. He said that provision of ideal facilities has been ensured to the farmers at the wheat procurement centers.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

APRIL

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



Hotels & Restaurants

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



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- Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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- Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480



ISLAMABAD: From left to right Deputy Editor Daily Islamabad POST Abid Raza, Editor Ansar M Bhatti, Federal Minister for Food Security Tariq Bashir Cheema and Raja Omar Kamran son of ex MPA Raja Kamran Afzal Tehsil Sarai Alamgir District Gujrat, at the residence of the Federal Minister. – DNA

FWO commences work on Islamabad highway

Project will take one year to complete. Not only will there be a six lane signal free track from koral to rawat but a metro bus track also for the blue line

DNA

ISLAMABAD: FWO has commenced work on Islamabad highway. The work on Korang Bridge is also being taken up in full swing and is likely to be completed at the earliest. Moreover work has also commenced on service roads leading to recently completed PWD interchange. Moreover work on Railway Bridge is also starting. Widening of road is also being carried out. Meanwhile an earlier planned project for balance works from koral to Rawat was to be taken up under PSDP. However, now CDA management intends to take up the same on its own for convenience of public. Similarly, a two lane metro track for blue line and planned stations will also be incorporated. Project will take one year to complete. Not only will there be a six lane signal free track from koral to rawat but a metro bus track also for the blue line.



HEC issues guidelines regarding nursing education

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has issued policy guidelines to Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Heads All Public / Private Sector Universities / Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) to review educational pathways for nursing degree programs in the country. In that regard, HEC also held a series of consultative meetings of National Curriculum Review Committee (NCRC) in collaboration with PNC and issued guidelines for nursing education. According to Official sources on Friday, the development of curriculum standards and its review at undergraduate and graduate level was one of the major ongoing activities at the HEC. Subsequently, the recommendations along with the roadmap are approved for implementation by all universities/Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs) imparting Nursing Education. As per details of recommended guidelines for nursing education, the eligibility criteria for admission in four-year BS Nursing (BSN) shall be HSSC/equivalent (12 years of schooling) in pre-medical group with minimum 50% marks. – DNA

CPEC workers all 'ambassadors' of Pakistan-China friendship

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani and Chinese employees are all 'ambassadors' between Pakistan and China," said Zulqarnain Haider, an outstanding Pakistani worker for a project under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday. Haider, a financial manager of Matiari-Lahore +660kV high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission project, under the framework of CPEC, has been working for this project for five years.

Haider is responsible for Accounts and Finance, supervising audits and leading tariff documentation team for tariff petition in National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). "I have issued more than 10,000 vouchers in the accounting software without any mistake. The outside auditors have not found a single error every year," Haider told Gwadar Pro. "Until now, I have not taken the annual leave. As the project is in construction, the reporting requirements is a bit more. I must manage the things well. Even at the worst of the Covid-19 epidemic, I have insisted on completing the tasks assigned by the company," said Haider. "I have successfully completed all audits of the company from the very beginning, which was a difficult task at the time because everything was new," Haider added. "At the same time, I have also completed all the financial and other compliance work required for State Bank of Pakistan and SECP," he said. "Well for me it's challenging at the beginning, so I tried my best to use my knowledge and experience for the best interest of my company. I have achieved them all. Now different accounting standards are applicable now," said Haider. "In addition, I keep updating International Financial Reporting Standards (applicable to our company) in order to prepare cost accounting statements, financial data and financial statements in accordance with the standards," Haider added. Haider told Gwadar Pro he once participated in the design of accounting software by using his experience in the article and the applicable standard operating system.

While highlighting the significance of educational portals, the Federal Minister said; in today's internet driven society, education portal provides an immediate access to institution's services on 24/7 basis. – APP

ICCI calls for urgent steps to curb loadshedding

ICCI President said that the country has an installed capacity of electricity of over 39000 MW, but currently the system is producing 12000 MW to 16000 MW of electricity, which shows the inefficient performance of the power sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to take urgent measures to curb the rising power loadshedding as it would badly hit the business and industrial activities besides making life of the common more miserable. He said this while addressing a meeting of the business community that was convened to discuss the loadshedding issue. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Sheikh Amir Waheed, Sardar Tahir, Azhar ul Islam, Ch. Muhammad Ali, Usman Khalid, Muhammad Shakir, Javed Iqbal, Omais Khattak and others were in the meeting. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that all the major industrial cities



of the country are facing electricity loadshedding of 4-10 hours daily due to which the production activities are badly suffering. He said that rural areas are also reportedly facing 10-12 hours loadshedding at a time when the mercury is on the rise and

this situation is making the life of common man more miserable. ICCI President said that the country has an installed capacity of electricity of over 39000 MW, but currently the system is producing 12000 MW to 16000 MW of electricity, which

shows the inefficient performance of the power sector. He said that Pakistan's energy sector has been facing great losses and distortions in the distribution sector for years, costing the national exchequer billions of rupees annually. He said

that the average transmission and distribution losses in Pakistan are around 20 percent, which are much higher as compared to other countries. He said that according to a report, in 2019 alone, DISCOs posted a loss of Rs.171 billion due to less recovery of pending bills and another Rs.38 billion due to technical losses. This situation necessitates that the government should take war footing measures to improve recovery of outstanding bills and reduce T&D losses that would help in minimizing the loadshedding and saving business & industries from great losses. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI also stressed for bringing drastic improvement in the performance of power companies as uninterrupted supply of electricity to businesses and industries is the key requirement to ensure better growth of economy.

AJK remembers Allama Iqbal

DNA

MIRPUR (AJK): In Azad Jammu & Kashmir 84th death anniversary of Kashmir-origin poet philosopher Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal was commemorated with full respect and honor coupled with the renewal of pledge to continue their just and principled struggle for liberation of Indian-illegally occupied Jammu & Kashmir. Born in 1877 in Punjab's city of Sialkot, Iqbal had died this day of April 21 in 1938.

Various cultural, political and social organizations hosted impressive ceremonies comprising seminars in various AJK cities to highlight the services rendered by the great visionary of 20th century and to pay homage to the Poet of the East. Special congregations comprising a grand poetic sittings (Mahafil e Mushaira) to mark the death anniversary of Allama Iqbal besides to pay tribute to the poet philosopher were held in various parts of AJK. The poets and the scholars on this occasion highlighted the importance of high intellect and pen of the poet philosopher Allama Iqbal for the betterment, uplift, self respect and sovereignty of the humanity and human values in line with the teachings of Islam and the Islamic values. The participants emphasized the need of acting upon the sayings of the poet philosopher who envisioned the idea of the emergence of separate home land of the Muslims of South Asia Pakistan, for maintaining the sovereignty, integrity, progress and prosperity of the country. The participants also offered Fateha for the departed soul praying for the solidarity, integrity and prosperity of the country besides for the early success of the Kashmiris struggle for freedom of Indian illegally occupied Jammu & Kashmir.

Education important for development: Sajid Turi

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development (OP&HRD) Sajid Hussain Turi here on Friday said that education was one of the most important elements for collective development of a society. Addressing at formal launch of education portal in OPF, the Federal Minister emphasized on maximum utilization of technology to improve educational standards. He said the Internet has revolutionized the education paradigm worldwide as it opens doorways to a wealth of information, knowledge, educational resources, increasing opportunities for learning in and beyond the classroom. While highlighting the significance of educational portals, the Federal Minister said; in today's internet driven society, education portal provides an immediate access to institution's services on 24/7 basis. – APP

76.7% youth believes EVMs helpful: Pildat

ISLAMABAD: Around 76.7 per cent youth of the country believed that Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) will be helpful in organizing free fair and credible elections, said a survey conducted by Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (Pildat). Whereas 22.1 per cent youth believed that the gadgets would not be helpful for the purpose, according to the survey conducted among the 422 members and alternates of PILDAT's Youth Parliament Pakistan spread over 232 (85.3 %) of total 272 National Assembly Constituencies in addition to Azad Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and Overseas Pakistanis from April 07 to April 12, 2022. "Reasons for low Youth Voter Turnout, Poor Performance of Politicians tops as key reason as 42.3% of youth respondents believe that the poor performance of politicians is the key reason for abysmally low youth voter turnout, followed by low level of trust in Political Parties (42%) and the poor past performance of Election Commission (37.5%)." – APP

Briefs

President administers oath to four new cabinet members

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday administered oath of office to three new federal ministers and a state minister. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif witnessed the oath-taking ceremony held here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. The federal ministers who took oath included Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Mian Javid Latif and Agha Hassan Baloch. Balochistan National Party's Hashim Notezai was sworn-in as state minister. On oath, the cabinet members made its solemn pledge "to bear true faith and allegiance to Pakistan, discharge its duties honestly to the best of ability and faithfully in accordance with the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the law". "I will strive to preserve the Islamic Ideology which is the basis for the creation of Pakistan. That I will not allow my personal interest to influence my official conduct or my official decisions," said the new ministers while chorus-reading the text of the official oath. Earlier on April 19, Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani had sworn-in the 33-member cabinet of PM Shehbaz Sharif. - APP



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi administering the oath to Federal Ministers at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Rs 3.15 per unit increase in power tariff likely for March

ISLAMABAD: The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) has sought Rs 3.15 per unit increase in power tariff for March under monthly Fuel Cost Adjustment (FCA) mechanism. According to the petition submitted to National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), the CPPA-G maintained that actual cost remained Rs 9.3869 per unit against the reference fuel charges of Rs 6.2295 per unit during February. A total of 10,418.42 GWh electricity was generated worth Rs 96.032 billion during the said period while 10,078.73 GWh net electricity was supplied to the power distribution companies (DISCOs). Out of total generation, as many as 16.35 per cent electricity was generated from hydel, 24.83 per cent Coal, 10.62 per cent furnace oil, 9.53 per cent local gas, 18.87 per cent RLNG, 15.01 per cent nuclear and 2.57 per cent Wind. - APP

English Language Day to be marked on April 23

ISLAMABAD: Like other parts of the world, the English Language Day will be marked on April 23 across the globe which coincides with William Shakespeare's birthday and World Book and Copyright Day. English is one of the most popular languages used worldwide. Celebrating the English Language Day aims to entertain and inform the people about the history, culture and achievements associated with the language. - APP

Govt notifies transfer, posting officers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday notified transfer and posting of high rank officers. According to a notification issued by Establishment Division, Malik Ziauddin Kasi, a BS-20 officer of Pakistan Audit & Accounts Service, presently awaiting posting at AGP Office, Islamabad, is transferred and posted as Chief Finance and Accounts Officer (CF&AO), Information Technology and Telecommunication Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. While, Toaha Hussain Bugti, a BS-21 officer of Secretariat Group, presently awaiting posting in Establishment Division, is transferred and posted as Senior Joint Secretary, Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. - APP

President provides relief to citizens in bank fraud cases

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has provided relief to two victims of bank fraud by ordering Bank Alfalah Ltd (BAL) to refund the defrauded money worth Rs 1.9 million to the respective account holders. The President also ordered the bank to educate its customers about internet banking, digital financial services and other safety measures to safeguard account holders from banking frauds. Mr Muhammad Shahzad, an account holder of Bank Alfalah Ltd (BAL), Lahore had tried to withdraw funds using an ATM but the cash was not dispensed even though he had sufficient balance

in his account. On further inquiry, it was revealed that an amount of Rs 1,479,255 had been unauthorisedly withdrawn from her account. It was found that a few days ago, the bank had activated the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) facility after receiving a phone call from the customer's registered phone number. Subsequently, the funds had been transferred from his account to other beneficiary accounts. Mr Shahzad lodged a complaint with the bank but his grievance remained unresolved. Similarly, Mrs Asma Attiq, another account holder of BAL, Gujranwala, was also defrauded out of her money when she received a call from the bank's helpline. She shared her personal data with

the caller after which an amount of Rs 499,400 was unauthorisedly withdrawn from her account. She also approached the bank for a refund, but the bank did not return her money. Both the complainants separately approached the Banking Mohtasib of Pakistan (BMP) to seek redressal of their complaints, who ordered the bank to refund their lost money. The Bank, in both the cases, chose to contest the decisions of BMP by filing separate representations with the President. The hearings of both cases were held and the bank took the plea that both customers had shared their personal banking details with unknown persons, therefore, it was not responsible for the loss of mon-

ey. The President rejected this plea on the ground that the bank had made the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) facility operational without the consent/request of the account holders. He underscored that it was the prime responsibility of banks to protect the interest of their customers and the systems installed by the bank to protect their interests were not robust enough and needed to be revised and strengthened. The President further observed that the bank was found negligent and non-compliant with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP)'s rules and regulations by not educating the customers about the pros and cons of the EFT facility before activating the channel. He observed that the bank could not produce any document/evidence to

the effect that they had complied with the provisions of relevant laws, rules and regulations of SBP. The violation of rules and regulations on part of the bank established malpractice, the President noted, and the loss of money could have been avoided if the bank had not made the EFT facility operational without their consent.

'The Bank was given ample opportunity to controvert the claims of the complainants and finding of BMP, but no justification was provided to upend the original decisions of the Mohtasib', the President held. He further stated that since no fault could be found with the original decisions of the Mohtasib, therefore, the representations of the bank are rejected.

NCHD to take various activities in Gilgit Baltistan

ISLAMABAD: National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) would take various activities with prime focus in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) aiming to enhance future interventions through donors. Talking to APP, senior official of NCHD said with the development of a long-term strategy, Gilgit-Baltistan will have a clear way forward for quality education, and will be in a strong position to attract both government and donor funding to support it. He said the Department of Education will be able to prepare coherent annual and long-term plans, and can identify funding gaps and coordinate the inputs of development partners to create a coherent programme. Adding he said this in turn will pave the way towards establishing a

Gilgit-Baltistan Sector-Wide Approach, led by the government and supported by development partners, formulating medium-term and long-term programmes within the framework of the long-term strategy. The key to the development of the vision and strategy was a public consultation exercise, in which over 1000 stakeholders from all walks of life throughout Gilgit-Baltistan were consulted to ascertain their views regarding the development of education in the region, he said. This vision and strategy was gradually refined through internal discussions and further consultations with all stakeholders, including representatives from the original public consultation exercise, and officials at Gilgit-Baltistan and federal level. - APP

Air quality healthiest since start of Ramzan

ISLAMABAD: The air quality of the federal capital on Friday was recorded the healthiest as health damaging air pollutants were far below the permissible limits in the atmosphere due to reduced vehicular traffic. The air quality data has been collected by the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) that monitors air pollutants ratio for 24 hours based on three intervals of eight hours data collection from different locations. The Pak-EPA data revealed that the air quality throughout the three intervals of data monitoring remained low as the pollutants were far less than the permissible limits of national environmental quality standards

(NEQS). The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM2.5) which was a lethal atmospheric contaminant remained 13.2 micro grammes per cubic meter on average which is below the NEQS of 35 microgrammes per cubic meter and denotes the air quality healthy. The PM2.5 is generated through combustion of an engine, industrial emissions, burning garbage or inflammable material, and dust blown up by fast moving cars plying on non-cemented patches of the roads. However, a slight jump in previous days was mainly due to congestion of automobiles plying on the roads owing to Ramzan timings during the peak working hours, he added. - APP

Petroleum sector gets Rs1,949.72m funds for 13 projects

ISLAMABAD: The government has released funds amounting to Rs1,949.72 million to execute seven ongoing and six new petroleum-related projects during first nine months of the current fiscal year under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2021-22) against a total allocation of Rs3,249.54 million. Out of the total disbursement of Rs1,949.72 million, around Rs355.39 million have been spent on petroleum projects during a nine-month period (July-March) of the current fiscal year to accelerate oil and gas exploration activities and achieve self-sufficiency in the energy sector, according to official data available with APP. As per the PSDP document, funds amounting to Rs1,473.683 million had been earmarked for seven ongoing schemes, out of which Rs 263 million were meant for the establishment of the National Minerals Data Centre (NMDC), Rs345.321 for the Expansion and Up-gradation

Sherry announces zero plastics in Climate Change Ministry on Earth Day

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday while commemorating the World Earth Day 2022 announced that the Ministry of Climate Change had abolished the use of plastic bottles in its premises to ensure eco-friendly change. The minister in a series of tweets on her official Twitter handle shared an info graphic depicting forests and oceans as lungs of the planet bearing the inscription "Our Planet has two lungs one is green the other is blue" along with her message in the tweet on the World Earth Day. The theme for this year is 'lets invest in our planet'. She urged the masses to shun the use of plastics to avoid pollution damaging the environment and biodiversity while taking the lead in climate action by themselves. "Our planet has two lungs; one is green, the other is blue". Let both breathe, so we can too. Save the planet by removing non-renewable



plastic from your day, your life. Make the shift at your office, at your home. From today the Climate Change Ministry will use no plastic bottles", she wrote in her tweet. She further mentioned, "There are no plastic bottles in daily use in my home, or my Senate office. Let's lead by example. Small steps by many will make the difference".

She said it would be great if others could make the effort to shift, adding, "The planet needs saving". She also thanked the social media user for sending her the info graphic. "Thank you for sending me this powerful graphic, whomever you are". The Minister's tweets were followed by the hash tags #EarthDay2022 #LetTheEarthBreathe. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan Raja Pervaiz Ashraf lay wreath at the monument of unsung heroes of democracy at parliament House. - DNA

IRSA releases 104164 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Friday released 104164 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 108029 cases. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1078.90 feet, which was 28.09 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded a 31065 and 28,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 54291, 40148 and 25670 cases respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River, a total of 20100 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 18464 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP

USC extends working hours at 200 outlets

ISLAMABAD: In order to facilitate public, Utility Store Corporation (USC) has extended its working hours from 10am-1am at 200 branches (Super Markets). USC Spokesperson said in statement that the additional Point of Sale (POS) machines have been installed at 100 utility stores to enhance the processing capability by 25 percent. The corporation expect to serve more customers by virtue of these actions. The USC has so far provided its service to more than 10 million families under the Prime Minister's Relief Package. The corporation management is consistently striving to provide the best services to its customers. - APP

Cheap rate kitchen items selling at USC gripping customer's attention

ISLAMABAD: A score of consumers outside Utility Stores Corporation (USC) has welcomed the discount Ramadan package announced by the government and said that the current government has significantly reduced the prices of sugar and wheat flour which is gripping the attention of consumers. The kitchen items being provided to the consumers through government-run utility stores are of high quality and I appreciate the current government for this landmark initiative, said a consumer while speaking to the PTV news channel. A customer expressed his satisfaction that utility stores were witnessing a huge rush of consumers in case of a huge gap between market and utility stores' prices. The quality of sugar, flour and other kitchen items in Utility stores is far better than in open markets, said another citizen. Sugar is available at Rs 70 per kg at all utility stores across the country, while a 10 kg bag of flour is available at Rs 400 which is a huge gap in price and gives relief to common people, said a utility store worker. - APP

Footwear exports surge 17.92% to \$116.686m 9 months

ISLAMABAD: The footwear exports witnessed an increase of 17.92 percent during the first nine months of financial year (2021-22) as compared to the exports of corresponding period of last year. Pakistan exported footwear worth US \$116.686 million during July-March (2021-22) against the exports of \$98.950 million during July-March (2020-21), showing growth of 17.92 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Likewise, the exports of all other footwear goods increased by 39.08 percent during the period under review as these went up from \$16.664 million last year to \$23.177 million during the current fiscal year. - APP

President doing his job

IN a welcome move, President Arif Alvi Friday administered oath to four new ministers, setting aside his differences with the Shahbaz Sharif-led government and agreeing to fulfil his Constitutional duties. The president proceeded to sick leave and didn't administer the oath to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and the ministers that were sworn in earlier, sparking a debate among the political circles about his motive to skip the constitutional duty. On Friday, it was reported that President Alvi has decided to remove the trust deficit with the new coalition government and play his due role. He administered the oath to three federal ministers and one state minister in a ceremony at the Presidency which was also attended by the prime minister. Mian Javed Latif from PML-N, Chaudhry Salik Hussain of PML-Q and Agha Hassan Baloch of BNP took oath as federal ministers whereas BNP's Muhammad Hashim Notezai took oath as minister of state. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif briefly met President Arif Alvi at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Wednesday, media reported. According to a statement issued by the President's Secretariat, during the meeting, the two sides discussed matters related to the political and economic situation in the country. Sources privy to the matter said that the meeting lasted for just 15 to 17 minutes. Earlier, the sources said that both the leaders will discuss the appointment of new governors in all the four provinces and the crisis that erupted after Punjab Governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema postponed the oath-taking ceremony of chief minister-elect Hamza Shehbaz. The meeting was aimed at reducing the bitterness and the political tensions that have enveloped the country after the ouster of the Imran Khan-led government through a no-confidence motion, the sources had said. With all that has taken place during last couple of weeks, it is in the interest of country that the top leadership maintains healthy working relation and hold the constitution supreme. Friday's ceremony is a good beginning.

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Boris Johnson: hanging on by a thread

FIRST the Conservatives opposed the motion. Then they went along with it. Next they tried to amend it. Then they pulled their own amendment. In the end, and after a procedurally chaotic day at Westminster, Tory MPs stayed quiet and nodded the opposition motion through. The formal result is that the committee of privileges will examine whether Boris Johnson misled parliament about Downing Street's lockdown parties. The informal result is that Mr Johnson has again lost control of his party and perhaps this time lost its confidence too. Amid the confusion of the preceding 48 hours, three things stand out. First, Mr Johnson is now further than ever from shaking off partygate. Second, the supposedly improved Downing Street machine is another write-off. And third, the Labour leader, Keir Starmer, who made one of his best speeches on Thursday, has won a significant victory. For the Tories, by contrast, the success of the Labour motion provided an abject climax to an abject day. Mr Johnson never had the support in the first place of the relatively few liberal Tories who remain. Many in the parliamentary ranks have deep misgivings too. Significantly, the prime minister is now also being abandoned by some on the right, like Mr Baker, who had stood by him until now. Although he was in India on Thursday, continuing to act as though the argument at home is a sideshow, Mr Johnson will know that his position is eroding, that the bell is tolling more loudly, and that Mr Starmer is remorselessly hunting him down. Public indignation about his lockdown parties, plus the inexorable worsening of the cost-of-living crisis, means that there is no quick fix for the Conservatives. British voters now believe that the government is handling almost every issue badly – by ratios of more than three to one in the case of inflation, taxation, immigration, housing and the NHS. Only 20% think Mr Johnson understands the impact of the cost-of-living increases on ordinary people. These are the figures of a broken leader and a wounded party. Mr Johnson's prime ministership is again hanging by a thread.

In India's battle for Hindu supremacy, the bulldozer is its newest weapon

Ruben Banerjee

The Prime Minister and his party brazenly bat for the cause of Hindutva, or Hindu nationalism, meaning that Muslims find themselves increasingly under siege. Several Muslim traders have been beaten to death by Hindu vigilantes, either on suspicion of trading in cattle or possessing beef. States, where the BJP is in power, have brought in laws banning the cattle trade because Hindus...

BY selectively targeting the country's Muslims, the ruling far-right BJP appeases its core Hindu base. Bulldozers are giant, ugly machines mounted on wheels that are used to bring down sturdy concrete structures with ease. In a macabre twist, bulldozers in India are being used to demolish the country's long-cherished ideals of religious harmony and peaceful co-existence. Backed by the might of a state that is seemingly vindictive against the minority Muslim community and ungrudgingly executed by supine officials, bulldozers deployed across many parts of the country to raze properties are tearing apart India's social fabric one brick at a time. The template for the demolitions, as witnessed recently in the state of Madhya Pradesh and then this week in the capital Delhi, is vicious but quite straightforward. First, bands of Hindu activists seeking the domination of their religion in a country of 1.4 billion and ideologically aligned with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, take to the streets in large numbers, ostensible to celebrate Hindu religious festivals. In Khargone, Madhya Pradesh, they were out to mark Ram Navami, the birthday of the Hindu deity

Lord Ram. In Delhi's Jahangirpuri, the occasion was Hanuman Jayanti, the birthday of Hanuman, a god venerated across India.

But pious motives soon disappear with the processionists turning raucous and provoking local Muslims. To do so, they publicly brandish swords, knives, and in some cases, pistols, and raise incendiary slogans. The din that is created with the purpose of rousing passions bears results when hot-heads among the Muslims respond. In some places, they pelted stones at the processionists and triggered a riot. The script then follows a pattern. The police come in, and right-wing politicians in power promise stern action to prove their might. This then is followed by the deployment of bulldozers that target shops and homes, predominantly those of Muslims.

The intent, those in power say, is pure, and aimed only at protecting law and order. Hours after the demolition drive in Delhi, Baijyant "Jay" Panda, BJP's national vice president, attempted to portray those at the receiving end as illegal immigrants. "India cannot allow them to carve out no-go areas as in many Western countries," he said. The police also portray the demolitions as a purely legal exercise to clear illegal encroachment on public land.

But the timing and the hasty manner of the bulldozer deployments are stark giveaways. Procedures laid down by laws are not followed and properties are being pulled down without serving their owners an advance notice. It robs them of the opportunity to prove the legality of their properties, if any exist. They are also disdainfully deprived of livelihoods and shelter. But then, the principal idea behind the demolitions is to portray the strength of those in power and "punish" the so-called rioters. It helps the BJP appease its core Hindu base when those being punished turn out to be overwhelmingly Muslim. Muslims, who account for some 14 percent of India's population and are about 200 million in number, have been at the receiving end. There have been instances of anti-Muslim violence and discrimination in the past, but they have sharply intensified since Modi was first voted into power in 2014.

The Prime Minister and his party brazenly bat for the cause of Hindutva, or Hindu nationalism, meaning that Muslims find themselves increasingly under siege. Several Muslim traders have been beaten to death by Hindu vigilantes, either on suspicion of trading in cattle or possessing beef. States, where the BJP is in power, have brought in laws banning the cattle trade because Hindus, who account for 80 percent of the Indian population, venerate the cow. Though a majority by an overwhelmingly wide margin, Hindu

activists claim their religion, customs and beliefs are under threat. Several states have therefore made laws discouraging interfaith marriages – particularly Muslim men taking Hindu wives.

In recent months, the assault widened further with Karnataka in India's south banning students from wearing the hijab, the Muslim headscarf. There is now a campaign against halal, the process of certifying food products under Islamic traditions, and against Muslim mango sellers.

The bulldozer's selective targeting of Muslims fits into a narrative that the ruling BJP wants to be propagated. Many, including Rahul Gandhi of the opposition Congress party, find it heart-breaking and abhorrent. "It is hatred and terror that are riding on BJP's bulldozers," Gandhi recently said.

It was terrifying indeed when the bulldozers came to raze the home of Haseena Fakhru, a widow living with her son in Khargone. Ironically, the house she lived in was built with financial assistance from Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – a flagship government fund run in the name of the prime minister. Given that the house was built with government assistance, Fakhru believed it had all the legal approval. Yet, her house was demolished and Fakhru was left desolate.

Equally stumped was Wasim Sheikh, a former painter who lost both his hands in an accident years ago. When the bulldozers came to punish the stone pelters of Khargone, his shop was targeted. That he did not have hands to pelt stones failed to deter the officials. The larger message that the demolitions help to drive home is loud and clear. It was Yogi Adityanath, the ochre-dressed monk and the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, who first publicised the so-called virtues of the bulldozer. Known to have used strong-arm methods against political opponents, including seizing their properties, Adityanath told voters before the recently-concluded state elections, that he resoundingly won, about his plans to use bulldozers extensively. It earned him the moniker "Bulldozer Baba" (Bulldozer Monk). His victory at the elections showed that the voters, predominantly Hindus, approved of his muscular tactics, and BJP leaders of other states are now competing to copy him. Meanwhile, one minister of Madhya Pradesh has proudly posed for photographs alongside a bulldozer.

Addressed locally as mama (uncle), the state's chief minister, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, is now being fondly called "Bulldozer Mama" by his followers.

With the ruling BJP standing to gain so much in the immediate term, Indian Muslims are unlikely to be shown any mercy any time soon.

– Courtesy: TRT World

Madam VP: Psagot is a racist settlement

Ray Hanania

First, though, Vice President Harris should know the history of that settlement and its products, which represent stolen property, targeted by the BDS – Boycott, Divestment, Sanction – movement that highlights products made on lands stolen from WB residents

ITHINK it is great that US Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband Doug Emhoff, the "second gentleman," hosted a Passover seder at their residence the other day. It is important that our elected officials recognize all of the major religions for Easter, Passover and Ramadan, as they have been doing these past few weeks when all three events occurred during the same month. Passover is just as important a holiday as any other so the dinner was a welcome event.

But what was disturbing at Harris' seder dinner was that she and her husband chose to serve a bottle of wine that was made in the illegal and racist settlement of Psagot, located in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Serving that wine was more than just a courtesy. It clearly signals that when it comes to Israel's violent aggression toward Palestinians, Harris is really no different from the people she often lambasts in the administration of former President Donald Trump.

Harris issued an explanation, not an apology, when the controversy about the Psagot wine surfaced in a few news stories. She said that the serving of the wine was not intended to be "an expression of policy."

Her response was a diplomatic way of avoiding responsibility, although what any president or vice president does is symbolically significant, no matter how they try to serve it up.

Most media did not consider it newsworthy and did not write about it. Maybe they enjoy Psagot wine too. In truth, though, the incident demonstrates how Harris and officials in the Trump administration really have so much in common. They really are not that different.

First, though, Vice President Harris should know the history of that settle-

ment and its products, which represent stolen property, targeted by the BDS – Boycott, Divestment, Sanction – movement that highlights products made on lands stolen from West Bank residents.

Psagot was founded in 1981 on a hill located near Ramallah called Jabel Tawil or, depending on your translation, "Long Mountain" or "Tall Mountain."

A military unit stationed there frequently fired missiles into Ramallah, targeting Palestinian leaders such as Mustafa Barghouti.

In November 2020, US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo, who brushed aside the international rule of law, became the first American government official to visit the illegal settlement and the winery.

With the support of the Trump administration, many Israeli companies operating on stolen Palestinian lands moved to have laws requiring their products to identify themselves as being made in the West Bank as opposed to "Israel." That did not get too far but the Israelis continue to work on it to get it changed. The fact that they want it changed suggests they know that the land is stolen and don't want to have to enjoy their profits under that dark veil.

The Psagot wine is harvested on stolen Palestinian lands and is therefore a stolen product.

So, for those who don't care about the international rule of law, or who don't believe Christian and Muslim Palestinians in the West Bank have the same rights as Jewish settlers in the West Bank, I guess they can both raise a glass of Psagot's blood-red Bordeaux blend, not to toast the Passover or peace but instead to toast the amazing similarities that exist between US Vice President Harris and the Trump administration.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Holy days in the holy land marred by violence

Yossi Mekelberg

Looking closely at the violent events of the past few weeks might leave any observer perplexed by trying to discover what links the Palestinian assailants who killed random Israelis...

IT is most disheartening that on the occasion of three holy festivals of the three monotheistic religions overlapping, as they do this year, instead of this being a catalyst for advancing interfaith dialogue and together searching for peace in the holy land, it becomes a source of tension and violence. What should have been a time of reflection on how religion could become a vehicle for breaking the impasse in bringing peace to this more than century-long conflict, it has instead become a driver for the same old negative dynamic whereby those who harbor the most extreme views and who see the worst in each other are imposing their outlook on everyone else. Only a year ago similar developments led to a prolonged episode of bloodshed across the holy land.

This year the holy days of Ramadan, Passover and Easter are all being celebrated at the same time, and in the weeks leading up to these religious festivals, terror has returned to the streets of Israel, not seen in this severity or frequency since 2015. In four sep-

arate incidents, that varied in the background of the attackers and the methods used, 14 Israelis and 5 Palestinian militants were killed. Moreover, last Friday some worshippers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque clashed with Israeli security forces, following a deliberate provocation by a group of Jewish extremists who encouraged activists to come to the Temple Mount to offer the ancient ritual of Passover sacrifice, knowing that any such attempt to change the status quo could only provoke Muslim worshippers. These events left many wondering if Israelis and Palestinians are on the verge of a confrontation that might see a repeat of last year's hostilities.

Looking closely at the violent events of the past few weeks might leave any observer perplexed by trying to discover what links the Palestinian assailants who killed random Israelis, including Palestinians living in Israel, in these separate attacks. One killer was a Bedouin from the Negev, in the south of the country; in another attack two gunmen came from the northern Israeli city of Umm Al-Fahm, and in the two other incidents, the militants came from the Jenin area in the occupied West Bank. Some of the terrorists claimed allegiance to Daesh, while other were associated with Hamas and Fatah. Despite this diversity of backgrounds, they all point to the deteriorating relations between Israel and the Palestinians, both inside Israel proper and the Occupied Territories, relations show little prospect of improvement while both Israeli and Palestinian political systems remain weak and fragmented and the international community has lost interest.

When one writes about terrorist attacks, there is usually an expected disclaimer condemning the murder of innocent people, before engaging in examining the attackers' allegiances and objectives. It goes without saying that randomly shooting and stabbing

people in streets or bars on behalf of some misguided ideology, distorted version of religion, out of a delusion that it could lead to political change in favor of those on whose behalf they claim to act, or out of despair or an urge to avenge wrongdoings, can never be condoned. Although the recent acts of violence were not carried out by suicide bombers, there was little doubt that none of the perpetrators believed that they could emerge alive after committing these killings, which indicates desperation. However, condemning and rejecting their acts is one thing; understanding their root causes and the conditions that breed militancy is another.

The Israeli government, the security establishment and the general public among the Jewish majority in the country are constantly deluding themselves that they are playing no part in the despair and hopelessness among so many Palestinians that drives some of them into the hands of radical and militant Islamists and causes a tiny minority of them to turn to violence. In a recent opinion poll among Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, despite nearly half of the respondents still supporting a two-state solution, it is worrying that due to the complete deadlock in any engagement toward this solution, there is also an increase in support for a return to armed struggle to advance their national aspirations.

What is seen as the status quo in Israeli-Palestinian relations is anything but. As a matter of fact, we are seeing a constant erosion of the political status and well-being of most Palestinians who live between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. They not only see their hope of one day living in an independent Palestine fast disappearing, but also their human, political and civil rights being relentlessly curtailed.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

NSC: No foreign conspiracy found

FROM PAGE 01
Addressing a press conference on April 14, the military spokesperson had clarified that the word "conspiracy" was not used in the statement issued after a meeting of the NSC last month. The military's spokesperson had said he cannot discuss what was discussed in the meeting but noted that the word "conspiracy" was not used.

US distances itself from Ilhan...

FROM PAGE 01
Some politicians immediately chided the PTI chairman for the meeting with Ms. Omar, reminding him of his criticism of US officials meeting opposition figures. In this regard, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah posed the question to Khan, "Was the meeting with the American Congresswoman part of a conspiracy or was it interference?"

President Alvi's...

FROM PAGE 01
At this, the advocate-general of Punjab said that under Article 104, the governor had "complete rights" to refuse the oath. However, the LHC CJ remarked that the governor cannot deny performing his duties and issued the short order.

"[A] governor cannot refuse to administer oath. President of Pakistan should appoint another representative for the oath taking," ruled LHC CJ in the short order. The court also directed its office to dispatch the order with President Arif Alvi. In a hearing held earlier in the day, Punjab Advocate-General Ahmed Owais in his arguments said: "The speaker can administer the oath if the governor refuses but the PA speaker has not been made a party in the petition."

The provincial law officer argued before LHC CJ Bhatti that the governor is of the view that the election of the chief minister was not held under the Constitution. At this, the CJ asked the AG to tell where it is written that the governor himself would witness the proceedings. In response, the advocate-general said that the governor is not a rubber stamp authority, and an extraordinary situation took place on April 16 which had never happened before - a female member was injured and she is now fighting for her life.

The CJ remarked: "Whether this incident will nullify the proceedings of the House, today is the 21st day that there is no government in the province while this election was also held on the orders of the court. This court knows how the election took place. The governor should tell if he is absent or he cannot administer the oath."

Advocate-General Ahmed Awais told the court that the governor has refused to administer the oath. At this, the chief justice asked him to give this in writing that the governor has refused to administer the oath so that the court can ask someone else to do the job.

The court said that it would issue an order if the governor does not make a decision. "Today, 21 days have passed and there is no government in the province. The governor of Punjab is not fulfilling his constitutional obligations. If the governor does not write a letter of refusal, the court will issue an order at 2pm," the judge had said in the morning.

Taking to Twitter, CM-elect Hamza Shahbaz termed the LHC's decision a "win for the Constitution." He wrote: "There has been no government for 21 days in the province of 110 million people. The CM was elected under the court orders first and now the Constitution has won regarding the oath-taking." Criticising the PTI members for not following the Constitution, Hamza said history will remember how they ridiculed the law and Constitution. "This province will lead towards the path of prosperity and development," he wrote.

Baku warns Armenia until it sign peace treaty

"The separation of Zangazur from Azerbaijan and its transfer to Armenia is a historical fact," he said

DNA

BAKU: The fifth Congress of World Azerbaijanis has today kicked off in the city of Shusha. President of the Republic of Azerbaijan IlhamAliyev made a speech at the Congress. "Today we are holding a Congress of World Azerbaijanis in free Karabakh and free Shusha. The name of this congress is Victory Congress, and this is natural. Because for the first time after the historic Victory, Azerbaijanis from all over the world are gathering to hold a congress. In general, the name of Victory is very appropriate for our people," said President Ilham Aliyev as he made a speech at the 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha. The head of state said: "You have come here through Victory Road, and the name of the Congress is Victory Congress. At present, Victory Museums are being built in different parts of the country, first of all, in liberated lands."



"From now on, the people of Azerbaijan will live as a victorious people, live forever, and our state will live as a victorious state from now on. This is a great happiness for all of us, for those living in Azerbaijan, for Azerbaijani citizens, for Azerbaijanis living abroad," said President IlhamAliyev in his speech at the 5th Congress of World Azerbaijanis in Shusha. "Our heroic sons who carried out this historic mission have rendered unparalleled services to history, to the people and to the Motherland. The youth who grew up in the years of independence, the youth who grew up in the spirit of patriotism have presented us with this historic feat, this historic news to the people of Azerbaijan," the head of state noted. The president underlined that there was no task more important and higher than the liberation of the country's lands from occupation. "We proved the greatness of Azerbaijani people to the whole world," he said. He added that today, the Azerbaijani army can perform any task.

Stressing that the peace treaty is the last chance for Armenia, the president emphasized that if Armenia refuses to sign a peace treaty, Azerbaijan will not recognize its territorial integrity and will officially declare it. "We will eliminate the territorial claims of Armenia and Armenians across the world to Azerbaijan," he said. Speaking about the Minsk Group, he noted that it was established not to resolve the conflict, but to perpetuate the occupation. "The separation of Zangazur from Azerbaijan and its transfer to Armenia is a historical fact," he said. At the same time, the head of state expressed his gratitude that Azerbaijan's diaspora organizations are in constant contact with the country. "It is very important that historical moments are always on the agenda of diaspora organizations," he said. Aliyev added that the native tongue is the main factor that unites all Azerbaijani citizens. The first Congress of World Azerbaijanis was held on the initiative of national leader Heydar Aliyev in 2001. The second, third and fourth congresses took place in accordance with the orders of President IlhamAliyev in 2006, 2011 and 2016 respectively.

Manmohan warns against 'hurried' dismantling of dollar structure

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: Former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who is also a world-famous economist, has warned against trading in local currencies and the "forced and hurried" dismantling of the US dollar structure. In an opinion piece published in The Hindu, a local English daily, on Friday, Singh said that the Russia-Ukraine conflict portends "a reshaping of the world order."

"The American dollar has emerged as the global trade currency, bestowing an 'exorbitant privilege' on the dollar, much to the justifiable consternation of other nations," Singh wrote. "But a forced and hurried dismantling of this order and replacing it with rushed bilateral local currency arrangements can prove to be more detrimental for the global economy in the longer run." Since Russia declared war on Ukraine on Feb. 24, the US and the EU have



imposed sanctions on Russia. Many countries are also now exploring trade settlement opportunities in their local currencies. He stated that the global village for nearly 8 billion people on the planet is built on the foundation of "advanced transportation networks, cemented with the U.S. dollar as the reserve currency and fenced by integrated payment systems." Singh, who used to draft the G20 economic agenda, said "any disruption to this deli-

cate balance runs the risk of plunging the 'Global Village' into disequilibrium and derailing the lives of all." Recalling the time when the former premier was part of bilateral currency negotiations - such as the Indian rupee-Russian ruble agreement in the late 1970s and 1980s when India mutually agreed on exchange rates for trading purposes, Singh said that "such isolated bilateral agreements are fraught with risks."

Badosa, Sabalenka to play in Stuttgart semifinals

"The third set was a perfect set for me," Sabalenka said. "She played really well; it was a really tough match, and I'm super happy with the result"

STUTTGART: Paula Badosa of Spain will set a new career-high in the Hologic WTA Tour rankings next week after she defeated Ons Jabeur in the quarterfinals of the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix. Badosa will move to World No. 2. She had to work hard to break new ground. Badosa and Jabeur went the distance for the third match in four career encounters, but it was the second-seeded Spaniard who prevailed in a 2 hour, 11-minute triumph, 7-6(9), 1-6, 6-3, to advance to her third semifinal of the year. The match was decided in the first set, which lasted 67 minutes. Before the tiebreak, both players held early leads—Badosa was up 2-0 and Jabeur was up 5-3—and both had set points. At 6-5 and 8-7, Badosa denied Jabeur the set, and she converted on her third chance. Badosa won just six points in the opening five games of the second set, and Jabeur's momentum was stifled to begin the final. At 1-1, the Spaniard saved three break chances, and from 2-2, an eight-point swing in her favor gave her a lead she would never relinquish. Despite a comeback by Jabeur in the seventh game, Badosa denied her two chances to tie the match at 4-4 before winning the final two games. AnettKontaveit wasn't ready to let her 22-match unbeaten streak indoors go without a fight. No.2 seed ArynaSabalenka gave her one, and for the second straight

year, Sabalenka advanced past her Estonian rival to reach the semifinals in Stuttgart. The pair's last meeting in the last eight at the Porsche Arena a year ago also went three sets, and with a victory on Friday, Sabalenka also improved her record against Kontaveit to 5-0 all-time. "The third set was a perfect set for me," Sabalenka said. "She played really well; it was a really tough match, and I'm super happy with the result."

On her dominance against Kontaveit, Sabalenka added, "Every match I play against Anett is always a battle; I wouldn't say I like to play her! Today, I enjoyed second on court, I enjoyed the game, and I think that's how I played through." Badosa and Sabalenka played twice last year on hard courts, with the Spaniard emerging victorious both times. Their second-round meeting in Cincinnati was a thriller, with Badosa triumphing in a third-set tiebreak from 4-5 down, and she later delivered an emphatic 6-4, 6-0 win at Akron WTA Finals Guadalajara. - DNA

Impact of personal selling on consumer's behavior

Personal selling is an effective way to build long-lasting customer relationships and grow a flexible, low-cost business. On the other hand, purchasing behavior or widely known as consumer behavior is one of the factors that organizations of the business eye on planning salesforce programs

ABUBAKAR KHURSHID & TAHA AHMED

IN today's world, many things are impacting the consumer's buying behavior and in those things, there stands personal selling as well. Personal selling has an impact on the buying behavior of the consumer. In personal selling when the consumer is exposed to better communication and a better view of the product, it impacts them and helps the salesperson in selling off the product to the customer. Even sometimes it leads to impulse buying from the customer since in personal selling you can easily convince the customer in

a better and a transparent way. Personal selling mostly impacts the youth, giving them on-spot discounts can change their behavior to buy the product. Does personal selling affect how a consumer behaves? Personal selling is a method of selling in which a salesperson contacts directly to the customer or consumer and the salesperson are someone who contributes to implementing the selling arrangement. In this method, direct selling can connect how will the people avail with the eye-to-eye way of selling. Personal selling is an effective way to build long-lasting customer relationships and grow a flexible, low-cost business. On the other

hand, purchasing behavior or widely known as consumer behavior is one of the factors that organizations of the business eye on planning salesforce programs. Consumer behavior refers to the selection, acquisition, and consumption of goods and services to meet their needs. Though, consumer behavior affects the way they avail the product or item they want based on the factors that are inclined with the decision to buy like demographics on which there is a certain focal point of the target market; the cultural factors that affect deeply influencing by having a share of each company in the particular area where they raised; also the

societal factors on which roles and statuses belong; personal factors that have significant impact from lifestyle, economic status, occupation, and personality; and the psychological factors wherein affects the consumer's perception, motivation, learning, beliefs, and attitudes. These factors might lead to the cause of having a decision on availing the product from personal selling; in which using its direct method while the consumer possibly interacted straightforwardly towards the salesperson, it is either to avail or not accordingly. In Pakistan we see that personal selling is being done in big retail stores, outlets and shopping malls

where sales employees are hired to either interact with customers and entail them towards new offerings or products by giving a demonstration of the product or offering and sometimes even letting the customer try out the product which we see is the case for many FMCG companies like Nestlé that often have salespeople giving out coffee sachets to people, or k&n's letting people taste their new offering or frozen food product by attracting passing-by audience full of potential and new customers alike. For example, in retail stores and malls, there are different brands offering makeup and amenities alike and each brand has a repre-

sentative salesperson who is getting the passer-by customers' attention to come and see a demonstration of their new product. Even Metro Cash n Carry have representatives from different brands working there to attract new customers. You'll find multiple salespeople trying to demonstrate their product. If you go to the electronics aisle then you'll have a salesperson from all the different brands like Sony, Samsung, Lg, etc to persuade you to come and see their product or demonstration and ignite a response out of you or just leave an impression that will eventually lead to the choice towards the buying decision.

President Alvi administers oath to...

FROM PAGE 01

Balochistan National Party-Mengal's (BNP-M) Agha Hassan Baloch and PML-N's Javed Latif took were sworn in as federal ministers, state-run APP reported. After the three were sworn in a federal ministers, BNP-M's Hashim Notezai was administered the oath of office and inducted into the cabinet as a minister of state. No details of their portfolios were immediately available. PM Shehbaz was also present at the oath-taking ceremony, and was seated next to President Alvi.

Pakistan concerned over terrorist attacks

FROM PAGE 01

"Today, another despicable terrorist attack at a mosque in Kunduz has also resulted in loss of precious lives while injuring many others". Pakistan strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Recent incidents indicate importance of support and cooperation with Afghan Interim Government for eliminating the scourge of terrorism and achieving lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan. The Government and the people of Pakistan extend deepest sympathies and condolences to the families of those who have lost lives in these terrorist attacks and pray for speedy recovery of those injured. The people of Pakistan stand in strong solidarity with their Afghan brethren in this time of grief.

Russian-owned Amsterdam Trade Bank collapses

THE HAGUE: A Dutch court on Friday declared the Russian-owned, Dutch-registered Amsterdam Trade Bank bankrupt after it was caught up in Ukraine-related sanctions. Amsterdam's district court made the ruling on the subsidiary of Russia's Alfa Bank in a decision confirmed by the Dutch central bank. In a statement on its website the central bank said customers holding deposits with ATB would be covered up to a maximum of 100,000 euros (\$108,000) under the Netherlands' deposit guarantee system. The central bank administrators the scheme on behalf of the Dutch government, adding ATB, founded in 1994, had some 23,000 customers. The bankrupt bank had recently condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine while stressing its business focus is European SMEs with funds from Dutch and German savers.

In a statement at the time it said as a regulated Dutch (European) bank, it acted independently of shareholders and complied with all sanctions against Russia. Washington on April 6 unveiled tough sanctions on Russian banks including Sberbank and Alfa Bank, the latter being Russia's top private lender, freezing all their assets linked to the US financial system. - APP

Moldova summons Russian ambassador

CHISINAU: Moldova on Friday summoned Russia's ambassador after a senior Russian commander said Moscow sought "control over the south of Ukraine" that could provide access to Moldova's breakaway region of Transnistria. "Moldova's foreign ministry views these statements as unfounded and contradicting Russia's position in support of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our country within internationally recognised borders," the ministry said in a statement. The ministry also expressed "deep concern" over the statements. Earlier Friday, Rustam Minnekaev, the acting commander of Russia's Central Military District, said that the Russian army would try to take full control over eastern and southern Ukraine. "Control over the south of Ukraine is another way out to Transnistria, where there are cases of Russian-speaking people being oppressed," Minnekaev said. - Agencies

Briefs

Cinema
Paradiso'
actor
Jacques
Perrin dies
at 80

PARIS: French actor and filmmaker Jacques Perrin, who starred in dozens of films including "Cinema Paradiso" and "The Young Girls of Rochefort" and co-directed "Winged Migration", has died at the age of 80, his family told AFP. "The family has the immense sadness of informing you of the death of filmmaker Jacques Perrin, who died on Thursday, April 21 in Paris. He passed away peacefully," they announced in a statement sent to AFP by his son, Mathieu Simonet. Born in Paris on July 13, 1941, Perrin appeared in more than 70 films in a long career spanning from the 1950s to the present day. Equally at home in French and Italian cinema, Perrin got his first leading role starring alongside Claudia Cardinale in "Girl with a Suitcase" in 1961.

Familiar to cinemagoers for his grey-to-white hair and soft voice, Perrin was frequently cast as a military officer and was known for "The 317th Platoon" in 1965, "Drummer-Crab" in 1977 and "A Captain's Honor" in 1982, all three directed by Pierre Schoendoerffer. - APP

Kyrgyz
president
signs decree
to develop
creative
economy

BISHKEK: Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhaparov on Thursday signed a decree on measures to develop a creative economy and create conditions for the progressive development of Kyrgyzstan, said his press service. The decree defines the creative economy as one of the priority areas of the state policy, and creative industries will be promoted as a new sector of the economy.

The cabinet is instructed to approve the concept of the development of the creative economy, determine the classification of creative industries and set up a creative industries park, according to the decree.

The cabinet is also required to develop a package of regulatory legal acts on the development of creative industries and the functioning of the creative industries park, including its governing bodies, residents and determining the principles for creating the regime of the park by Oct. 1. - APP

Malaysia's
inflation rises
2.2 pct

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's consumer price index (CPI) in March increased 2.2 percent from a year ago, surpassing the average inflation of 1.9 percent for the period January 2011 to March 2022, official data showed Friday.

The four percent increase in food inflation, which is the largest component of the overall weight of CPI, remained to be a major contributor to inflation in March, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) said in a statement.

This was followed by furnishings, household equipment, and routine household maintenance which grew three percent; restaurants and hotels which climbed 2.9 percent and transport which expanded 2.6 percent. According to the DOSM, the CPI for the first quarter of 2022 rose 2.2 percent as compared to the same quarter of the preceding year. On a monthly basis, the CPI increased 0.3 percent as compared to February. - APP

US military building training camp in Taiwan

BEIJING: After the deployment of US soldiers in Taiwan was confirmed last year by President Tsai Ing-wen, new reports suggest American troops are setting up a "training ground" on the self-ruled island. Taiwanese troops are also reportedly getting lessons from US soldiers on how to operate the M1A2T Abrams tank, said local media. US military instructors have reached the island nation to train Taiwanese soldiers in maintenance, training, fortifications, simulator purchasing, and other

projects including code development. According to the daily Taiwan News, the US soldiers have "started setting up a training ground in northwestern Taiwan's Hsinchu County, while 84 Taiwanese soldiers are to be sent to the US to undergo tank training next year." Last October, Tsai confirmed for the first time the presence of the US military on the island. She had said the troops were meant for "training purposes," but gave no numbers. - Agencies

Pak-Sino co-op in Photovoltaics industry, most pressing need

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sino-Pak cooperation in Photovoltaics (PV) industry, is the most pressing need, says a report published by Gwadar Pro reported on Friday.

China is a champion in solar photovoltaic technology and we are lucky that China and Pakistan are friendly neighboring countries,' experts said, adding that Chinese panels are durable and above all economical. "Access to Clean Energy Program" of KP is mainly based on Chinese technologies. The solar panels, lithium batteries, inverters and other equipment have been imported from China.

The rechargeable Li-on batteries used in the projects are the productions of PylonTech China while Crystalline Silicon Photovoltaic Modules are produced by Shanghai JA Solar Technologies Co., Ltd. China. Similarly, the inverters used in the solar mini-grid stations are made in China. The majority of them are the products of Volttronic Power Technology (Shenzhen), China. "With the inauguration of the solar grid station, traders in Jandola Bazaar will begin to obtain uninterrupted, cheap and clean energy," Muhammad Khan Mehsood, a shopkeeper told Gwadar Pro.

Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO) is constructing solar mini-grid stations (Photovoltaic Solar System) to provide uninterrupted electricity to business centers in the newly merged districts

of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

One of these solar mini-grid stations is located in Jandola, subdivision Tank in southern KP. Construction of the mini-grid station is almost completed and the power transmission will be accomplished shortly, according to PEDO. "It will supply electricity to hundreds of shops in Jandola Bazaar, where unannounced load shedding has been a longstanding issue for local traders," Mr. Mehsood said, adding that it would help boost business activity in the bazaar. The capacity of the mini-grid is 175 KW. About 390 solar panels, with a capacity of 450 watts each, have been installed in the station. As per the Government's plan, a total of 13 mini-grid stations would be set up in the tribal districts of the province. The solar mini-grid stations in Jandola, Orakzai and Mohmand tribal districts are in the final stages of their completion and soon the business community will start enjoying uninterrupted, cheap, green and clean energy. A PEDO official, working on Jandola solar mini-grid station, told Gwadar Pro that the technology used in the station mainly comes from China. "The solar panels, lithium batteries and inverters are made-in-China," he said.

The Government of KP is in the process of the solarization of 8,000 schools, 4,000 mosques and 187 basic health units (BHUs) as per "Access to Clean Energy Program". PEDO is currently executing the clean energy program in different parts of the province. Under this program, 370 schools have

been fully energized through solar system in the district of Swat.

With the completion of programs, 12 MW load will be shifted from National Grid Station to alternate solar energy, according to officials. PEDO has recently completed the solarization of the Government Primary School Topsis, Swat. The school is located at a distant hilly area in Janoo Chamtalai union council. "Now we have lights and fans and there is no issue of electricity," said Muhammad Ijaz, a teacher of the school. "Students are happy while their parents are delighted to see their children in peaceful study environment," he said, adding that due to scorching summer heat and prolonged power outages, in many areas of the province parents stop sending their children to schools. PEDO has also installed a solar system in BHU Madyan Swat. "The solar system is a relief for medical staff, patients and their attendants," Dr. Fazal Rabi told Gwadar Pro, and he appealed to the Government to do the solarization of all health facilities. "Pakistan can avail China's help for the solarization of the hospitals," he added Besides schools and BHUs, the people of KP are delighted to see solar panels installed in mosques and worship places of religious minorities. Muslims visit mosques five-times for worship; the availability of uninterrupted electricity power by solar panels is nothing less than a blessing for them. One such mosque is Masjid Aqsa Toth Patay Swat where the solar system

has been installed.

Many Pakistani families have started using solar power. Well-off people have proper solar system at their homes while poor people simply use solar panel connected to a small DC fan during the day. Thanks to Chinese technology, even gypsies carry solar panels with them from place to place to run fans and charge their cellphones with them. Some farmers use a solar-powered fan to separate the grains from the husks. The use of solar energy has become an integral part of life, especially in rural Pakistan.

"We import solar panels from different companies from China e.g. JA Solar, Yingli, Suntech, Longli and SUOER and many others," said Ihsan Khan, who deals in solar panels in Peshawar. "We are executing projects in both public and private sectors," he told Gwadar Pro. Pakistan is currently reporting a major shortcut to households and industries. Instead of buying expensive coal and natural gas to fuel its power plants, the country should focus on increasing renewable energy production.

According to Engineer Muhammad Aziz, power generation under CPEC should focus on the development of renewable energies such as solar, wind and hydropower.

"The transfer of technological innovations and skills from Chinese companies to the local renewable energy manufacturer can also help Pakistan," Mr. Aziz told Gwadar Pro, adding that "investors from both countries should enter into joint ventures in photovoltaic technology in SEZs".

Azerbaijan, Pakistan discuss co-op in various fields of music

BAKU: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee has met with Director of the International Mugham Center (IMC), People's Artist Murad Huseynov.

IMC Director Murad Huseynov highlighted the activities and history of the center. He emphasized the importance of establishment of the International Mugham Center in terms of promoting the traditional Azerbaijani Mugham, which was proclaimed by UNESCO as a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, worldwide.

Huseynov also hailed the Azerbaijani government's attention and care to the national and cultural heritage, as well as the efforts of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation and First Vice-President Mehriban Aliyeva to promote the traditional Azerbaijani art of Mugham in the world. Director Murad Huseynov also spoke about the prospects of cooperation in various fields of music. Ambassador Bilal Hayee familiarized himself with the International Mugham Center and shared his views on cooperation and possible projects. The Pakistani diplomat stressed the importance of developing relations in the field of music. - DNA

Direct
NATO-Russia
conflict
raises risk
of nuclear
war

BERLIN: NATO must avoid open military conflict with Russia that could increase the risk of nuclear war, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said in an interview published on Friday. "I have said very early on that we must do everything possible to avoid a direct military confrontation between NATO and a highly armed superpower like Russia, a nuclear power," Scholz told Der Spiegel magazine.

"I am doing everything to prevent an escalation leading to a third world war. There must be no nuclear war." His comments came in the wake of mounting criticism over Germany's refusal to send heavy weaponry to Ukraine. Scholz warned that his country could be considered a party to the war if it sends equipment such as tanks. - APP

Brussels
to host 6th
Syria donor
conference

BRUSSELS: The European Union will host the 6th Brussels conference on Syria next month, the European Commission announced on Friday. The European Union does not forget about the suffering and "continued tragedy of the people of Syria" despite the war in Ukraine and "this is why we will host the Brussels conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region," said Peter Stano, the EU institution's lead spokesman on foreign affairs. The donor conference, set to take place on May 9-10, "will allow the international community to reaffirm its commitment to the Syrian people and also to the countries who are helping them," he added.

Governments, international organizations and agencies, as well regional organizations and representatives of the civil society will participate at the conference that also serves as a "platform to be heard" for the Syrian people, Stano said.

Last year, the international community pledged 5.3 billion (\$5.7 billion at current prices) aid for Syrian and neighboring countries hosting refugees. Syria has been embroiled in a vicious civil war since early 2011, when the Assad regime cracked down on pro-democracy protests with unexpected ferocity. Over 400,000 people were killed, and more than 12 million forced to flee their homes, becoming refugees or internally displaced over the past ten years, according to the EU. Turkey is the largest host country for Syrian refugees and provides protection to nearly 4 million people who fled the neighboring country. - DNA

Turkiye
'neutralizes'
42 PKK
terrorists

ANKARA: Turkish security forces have "neutralized" 42 PKK terrorists since the recent launch of Operation Claw-Lock in northern Iraq, the country's National Defense Ministry said on Friday. The anti-terror operation is successfully proceeding as planned, according to the ministry, which also posted footage of the operation on Twitter. According to the ministry, after reports that the terrorist group was planning a large-scale attack, the new operation was launched on Monday, which is in accordance with the principle of self-defense enshrined in the UN Charter. - APP

Rights
activist slams
Germany

BERLIN: A Berlin-based refugee rights activist on Friday harshly criticized the German government for what he said was its unequal treatment of refugees from Ukraine and the Middle East on racial grounds. "It's disgusting because people who are running away from war, who are running away from bombings would be treated differently," Biplab Basu told Anadolu Agency in an exclusive interview. Basu, who is a consultant at the non-governmental organization ReachOut, added: "It is rampant that refugees from the Middle East, India, Pakistan, and various African countries have been treated completely differently and in a racial manner." - APP

Armenia must
sign peace treaty
for better future

BAKU: Azerbaijan has created a new reality in the South Caucasus,

Assistant to the President of Azerbaijan - Head of the Foreign Policy Department of the Presidential Administration Hikmat Hajiyev said, Trend reports. Hajiyev made the remark at a panel meeting named "Tasks facing Azerbaijan in the post-Soviet period, action plan/road map" within the framework of the 5th Congress on April 22 in Shusha city. According to him, this new reality is the peace agenda of the region, and the five-point principles prepared by Azerbaijan [within a future peace treaty] were presented to Armenia. "If Armenia and the Armenian people want to look to the future, they must appreciate these opportunities," he explained. The speeches of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev during the 2020 second Karabakh war played a big role in preventing the information blockade, the president's assistant said. "In the post-Karabakh war period, the Armenian lobby continues to carry out anti-Azerbaijani campaigns," he noted. "According to the resolution recently

adopted by the European Parliament, Armenian material and cultural monuments were allegedly destroyed in the territories liberated from Armenian occupation [in the second Karabakh war]. "But why the European MPs who adopted this resolution don't see the destroyed cultural and historical monuments of the Azerbaijani people?" Hajiyev asked. - Agencies

Russia's actions in Ukraine may amount to war crimes

AGENCIES

GENEVA: Russia's war on Ukraine has devastated the lives of civilians throughout the country and its "indiscriminate" actions may amount to war crimes, the UN Human Rights chief said on Friday. "Russian armed forces have indiscriminately shelled and bombed populated areas, killing civilians and wrecking hospitals, schools and other civilian infrastructure, actions that may amount to war crimes," said Michelle Bachelet. In a statement, she called for all parties to respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular the rules governing the conduct of hostilities. "Over these eight weeks, international humanitarian law has not merely been ignored but seemingly tossed aside," Bachelet said. "What we saw in Government-controlled Kramatorsk on 8 April when cluster submunitions hit the railway station, killing 60 civilians and injuring 111 others, is emblematic of the failure to adhere to the principle of distinction, the prohibition



of indiscriminate attacks and the principle of precaution enshrined in international humanitarian law." The statement said the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) has also documented "the use of weapons with indiscriminate effects, causing civilian casualties and damage to civilian objects, by Ukrainian armed forces in the east of the country."

From Feb. 24 to April 20, the UN documented and verified 5,264 civilian casualties - 2,345 killed and 2,919 injured. During a mission to Bucha on 9 April, UN human rights officers documented the unlawful killing, including by summary execution, of some 50 civilians, the statement added. Bachelet said "this senseless war must stop" but as the fighting shows no sign of abating, it is important that all parties to the conflict strictly respect international humanitarian law.

"This means distinguishing between civilian and military objects. It means not targeting or deliberately killing civilians. It means not committing sexual violence. People, including prisoners of war, must not be tortured. Civilians, prisoners and others hors de combat must be treated humanely," she stressed. "I call on the parties to the conflict to investigate all violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law allegedly committed by their nationals, armed forces and affiliated armed groups, in line with their obligations under international law."

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Briefs

Army officer martyred in gunfight with terrorists

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A Pakistan Army major embraced martyrdom during an exchange of fire with terrorists in Balochistan's Awaran area, the military's media affairs wing said on Friday.

According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), a group of terrorists "fire raided" a security forces' checkpoint in the area of Kahan, near Awaran. However, the forces repulsed the attack and went after the terrorists in the nearby mountains.

"At one of the cordons established to block the passage of fleeing terrorists, a heavy exchange of fire took place between terrorists and security forces," the ISPR added. During the skirmish, the military said, a valiant son of the soil, Major Shahid Basheer, lost his life while another soldier sustained injuries. The ISPR said the forces caused heavy losses to the terrorists. "Security forces, in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging peace, stability, and progress of Balochistan."

Over 4m pilgrims performed Umrah in Ramazan

ISLAMABAD: Over four million Muslims have performed Umrah or lesser pilgrimage in the first 20 days of Ramazan, a Saudi official has said. "Since the start of holy Ramazan and until its 20th day, 4.2 million pilgrims were allowed to undertake Umrah in the Grand Mosque in line with health precautions," said Osama bin Mansour, the deputy head at the Presidency General for Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques for Congregation Management.

Bin Mansour said competent agencies have optimised their operational capacity to serve Umrah pilgrims during Ramazan including designation of the circumambulation (Tawaf) courtyard that houses the holy Kaaba at the Grand Mosque for pilgrims, Gulf news reported. Bin Mansour underlined the integration of services provided at the Grand Mosque in proportion to the needs of pilgrims and worshippers, providing the finest services and developing paths for the elderly and people with disabilities, calling on pilgrims to adhere to the timing designated via the Eatmarna and Tawakkalna applications. - APP

Government to amend ECL Rules: Minister

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sana Ullah on Friday said the Federal Cabinet had approved amendments in the Exit Control List Rules that after 120 days the name of a person would automatically be deleted from the ECL in case allegations were not proved.

Addressing his maiden press conference after assuming the charge of the ministry, the minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, soon after taking oath of the office, paid attention towards the grave issue and set up a committee to come up with the amendments in ECL Rules within three days.

The committee comprising Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Azam Nazir Tarar, Syed Naveed Qamar and Maulana Asad Mehmood completed the task within the stipulated time, he added. Rana Sana Ullah said in the past, the people were put unnecessarily in the ECL to pressurize them. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was also used to pressurize the opponents of the then government, he added.

US, Pakistan expand green energy, improve power supply

"The United States looks forward to advancing our partnership with Pakistan to build a clean, efficient, and reliable electricity generation sector, laying a foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth," said USAID Mission Director Julie A. Koenen

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is partnering with the Pakistani government to launch a \$23.5 million, four-year power sector improvement project to address climate change and increase the share of green energy in Pakistan's energy mix. Through technical assistance to the government and private sector, the project will also improve the management and operations of power transmission and distribution systems, increasing the financial viability, reliability, and affordability of Pakistan's power system.

"The United States looks forward to advancing our partnership with Pakistan to build a clean, efficient, and reliable electricity generation sector, laying a foundation for sustainable and inclusive growth," said USAID Mission Director Julie A. Koenen at the launch ceremony. "Through this new initiative, USAID will partner with the Government of Pakistan to support the transition to a truly competitive wholesale power market. This will increase private sector participa-



tion in an open and transparent manner and support our shared energy reform goals," she added.

Mr. Shah Jahan Mirza, Managing Director of the Private Power Infrastructure Board, praised USAID for its strong partnership, innovation, and sustained cooperation in supporting Pakistan's transition to clean energy and said he looks forward to continuing the partnership to improve Pakistan's power sector performance.

Over the last 75 years, the U.S.-Pakistan partnership has improved Pakistani lives by building dams and transmission lines, responding to humanitarian emergencies, and combatting shared challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and water vulnerabilities.

To expand Pakistan's energy supply, the United States and Pakistan have built three dams— Gomal Zam dam in South Waziristan, Satpara dam in Gilgit Baltistan, and Golen Gol dam in Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, adding 143 megawatts of electricity to the national grid – and together have rehabilitated the Mangla and Tarbela dams and three thermal power plants, and connected more than 860 megawatts of commercially-funded wind and solar projects to the national grid.

Pakistan reports fresh polio case

ISLAMABAD: A 15-month-old boy was paralyzed by wild poliovirus in the first such case in 15 months in the country. This is the third case of wild polio to be recorded globally in 2022, the official of the National Polio Eradication Programme confirmed on Friday.

The type-1 wild poliovirus (WPV1) was confirmed in the child from North Waziristan on 22 April 2022 by the Pakistan National polio laboratory at the National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad, with the onset of paralysis on April 9, he added. The Pakistan polio laboratory also confirmed the detection of a positive environmental sample collected on April 5, 2022, from the Bannu district of the same province. Both these viruses are closely related to each other. Pakistan had reported one case last year with onset on 27 January 2021 in Killa Abdullah, Balochistan. "This is, of course, a tragedy for the child and his family and it is also very unfortunate both for Pakistan and polio eradication efforts all over the world. We are disappointed but not deterred," said Secretary Health Aamir Ashraf. - APP

We have to move towards 'mature democracy': CJP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan CJP Umar Ata Bandial on Friday said that the country has to be taken towards a "mature democracy." The remark came during the hearing of the presidential reference seeking the interpretation of Article 63(A) of the Constitution.

Supreme Court's larger bench – headed by CJP Bandial and comprising Justice Muneeb Akhtar, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, Justice Mazhar Alam, and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhel – was hearing the reference. "We have to take the country towards mature de-

mocracy and for that, it is necessary for the legislators to have a fruitful discussion," CJP Bandial remarked. He observed that the votes of the dissidents should not be counted to ensure national interest and to end the scourge of shifting loyalties. "Court's job is to answer all constitutional questions," he said, asking if the court is bound to answer according to the words stated in the reference or can it interpret otherwise. Meanwhile, Justice Mandokhel, while addressing PTT's lawyer Advocate Ali Zafar, said that political parties should treat "this cancer" on their own if they have any inconvenience because of it. "Only one political party is against

dissidents. We have the majority of political parties that oppose your [PTT's] stance," Justice Mandokhel remarked. He asked if the PTT expects the court to rule in its favour while ignoring the majority's opinion. Justice Akhter, however, was of the view that the only graceful way for the deviant member is to resign and go home.

The former PTI-led government had filed the reference after it started losing majority in the National Assembly as a number of its members gave their support to the Opposition of that time over the no-confidence motion submitted against former prime minister Imran Khan. The SC is conducting hearings on the reference almost on a daily basis.

Law and order situation discussed

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: A high level meeting regarding law & order held here on Friday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair reviewed in detail the overall Law & order situation of the province including the newly merged districts. The meeting expressed concerns over the increasing incidents of law & order and attacks on the personnel of Law Enforcing Agencies (LEAs) in certain parts of the province; and took a number of decisions after threadbare discussion on various matters to devise future course of action for the effective prevention of such incidents.

Special assistant to CM on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Chief Secretary Dr. Shehzad Bangash, Inspector General Police Moazzam Jah Ansari, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Home Yahya Akhwanzada, Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud and other concerned civil and military high ups attended the meeting. Briefing the participants of the meeting regarding the current law & order scenario of the province, increasing incidents of law & order, steps taken by LEAs to prevent such incidents, achievements of the LEAs against miscreants and various other related issues, it was told that the current situation in the neighboring country Afghanistan had direct impact on law & order situation in the province adding that law & order incidents and attacks on the personnel of LEAs has increased in certain parts of the province whereas threats level is also on the higher side, however, LEAs were fully prepared to deal with such challenges in an effective manner and they have achieved a number of remarkable success during actions against miscreants.

The meeting stressed the need for result oriented steps under a joint strategy of all the relevant stakeholders to prevent the law & order incidents in the province; and the concerned authorities were directed for necessary steps to this end. It was decided in the meeting to revisit the security plans of educational institution and sensitive places in the province; and to put in place foolproof security plans for the purpose.

IHC to broadcast live court proceedings

USMAN CHAUDHARY

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark decision, the IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah on Friday allowed live streaming of the court proceedings. In compliance with the IHC CJ's order, the IT department of the Islamabad High Court has installed the system in the courtroom for live streaming of court hearings. As a trial, the proceedings of different cases will be broadcast live on a limited scale from today. If remained successful, people would be able to watch court proceedings live on a website. CJ Minallah also sought suggestions from the court reporters on live streaming initiative in order to make the initiative successful. He has directed the IHC Journalists Association to assist him in this regard. Former information minister and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Fawad Chaudhry hailed IHC's live proceedings decision and urged a special FIA court to allow live telecast of court proceedings in money laundering case against Shehbaz Sharif.

Nigerian top general meets Naval, Air Chiefs

ISLAMABAD: The Chief of Defence Staff Nigerian Armed Forces, General Lucky Irabor called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, the dignitary was received by Naval Chief. During the one-on-one meeting between the dignitaries, matters of mutual interest including bilateral collaborations and regional security were discussed. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan Navy's efforts and initiatives in support of collaborative maritime security and stability in Indian Ocean.

The recent visit of Chief of Defence Staff Nigerian Armed Forces will further enhance bilateral collaboration between the Armed Forces of two countries.

Separately, General Lucky Eluonye Onyenuchea Irabor called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his

office. The visiting dignitary appreciated sound professionalism of PAF personnel and also acknowledged the achievements made by PAF in recent years through indigenization. The Air Chief said that Pakistan and Nigeria had longstanding religious, cultural and historical bonds which were manifested through strong ties between the Air Forces of two countries. The visiting dignitary expressed his complete satisfaction on the performance of JF-17 fighter aircraft, inducted from Pakistan. He also said that the JF-17 aircraft, with its multirole fighting capabilities, would prove to be a great asset in addressing the security requirements of Nigeria. Both the dignitaries agreed to further revitalize defence ties including training and indigenous production. Various matters of professional interest and regional security also came under discussion during the meeting. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: The Chief of Defence Staff Nigerian Armed Forces, General Lucky Irabor calls on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi at Naval Headquarters. - DNA

Russia says Moscow aims to control all of southern Ukraine

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: Moscow wants to take full control over southern Ukraine, a Russian general said on Friday, a statement Ukraine said gave the lie to Russia's previous assertions that it had no territorial ambitions.

Rustam Minnekayev, deputy commander of Russia's central military district, was quoted by Russian state news agencies as saying full control over southern Ukraine would give it access to a breakaway, Russian-occupied part of Moldova in the west.

That would cut off Ukraine's entire coastline and mean pushing hundreds of miles west beyond current lines, past the major Ukrainian cities of Mykolaiv and Odesa.

Moscow says it is conducting a "special military operation" to demilitarise Ukraine and liberate its population from people it calls dangerous nationalists. Ukraine and its Western allies say Russia's invasion is an unjustified war of aggression.

"They stopped hiding it," Ukraine's defence ministry said on Twitter. Russia had "acknowledged that the goal of the 'second phase' of the war is not victory over the mythical Nazis, but simply the occupation of eastern and southern Ukraine. Imperialism as it is." Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov declined to comment when asked if Russia had expanded the goals of its operation and how Moscow saw the political future of southern Ukraine.

A senior EU official said the next cou-

ple of weeks were likely to be decisive. "This is not a fairy tale with an imminent happy ending. I think we are likely to see a very significant increase in the intensity of Russian military attacks in the east, I think we are likely to see an intensification of Russian military attacks along the coast," the official told reporters.

Ukraine's general staff said Russian forces had increased attacks all along the frontline in the east and were trying to mount an offensive in the Kharkiv region, north of their main target, the southeastern Donbas region. In Kharkiv city, Russian shellfire hit the main Barabashovo market. Ambulance services said there had been casualties but no details were available yet. A wedding hall and a residential building were also struck.

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