

Islamabad POST

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Mushahid urges review of 'faulty security system'

Detailed News On Page-04

EU calls for restraint over Moldova blasts

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Australian HC wishes Eid to Pakistanis

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Gilani acquitted in video case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) Friday acquitted Yousaf Raza Gilani, dismissing PTI's petition filed for the disqualification of the PPP leader from the Senate seat. Announcing its decision, the commission said that no evidence was found against Yousaf Raza Gilani. However, the ECP directed the District Election Commissioner Islamabad to take action against Ali Haider Gilani, MNA Faheem Khan and Jamil Ahmad Khan for their involvement in corrupt practices. The PTI had filed a petition seeking disqualification of PPP Senator-elect Yousaf Raza Gilani last year, asking the electoral body to stop the issuance of the notification confirming Gilani's victory on a general seat from Islamabad in the Senate elections.

Hooliganism unmasked Imran Khan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-President Maryam Nawaz said on Friday what could be more unfortunate than the fact that some people shouted abuses at Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb inside Masjid-e-Nabawi (PBUH), showing least regard for the sanctity of the holy month of Ramadan, and the second most holy place for the Muslims on earth. In a series of tweets, Maryam Nawaz said who could be more unlucky than those people who, instead of begging forgiveness from The Almighty Allah in the holy month, waste all their good deeds instead. In yet another tweet, Maryam said that yesterday's hooliganism at the holy mosque had unmasked Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan and his party workers who used Islam for political purposes. "And that was the punishment they rightly deserved," she commented.

Holiday Notice

Islamabad POST will observe Eid Holidays from Saturday April 30 to Wednesday May 04. We shall resume work on Thursday May 5. - Editor

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Chants at Prophet's Mosque

Pakistanis arrested in Saudi Arabia

The Embassy official says that the individuals were arrested after they violated the rules of the mosque

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: After some protesters, allegedly belonging to the PTI, violated the sanctity of the Masjid-e-Nabawi (PBUH) in Madinah on Thursday by loudly chanting slogans against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation, Saudi Arabian authorities have arrested some Pakistani nationals involved in the incident. According to the director of information at the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Islamabad, some Pakistani nationals have been arrested for violating the sanctity of the Masjid-e-Nabawi and an investigation has been launched into the matter. The official further added that the individuals were arrested after they violated the rules of the mosque. PM Shehbaz and his delegation had reached Saudi Arabia on Thursday for a three-day official visit at the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Shahzain Bugti, Mohsin Dawar,

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Condemning resolution submitted

DNA

QUETTA: A resolution condemning the Madina incident was submitted in the Balochistan Assembly on Friday. It was emphasized in the resolution that this House demands action against the Pakistani passport holder involved in this incident. The resolution said that this House strongly condemns the insolence and disrespect of the Madina Pak and calls for action against the Pakistani passport holder in this case. The condemning resolution said this act is not only an insult and blasphemy of the Holy Haram but also defamed Pakistani values and national identity. Yesterday, a despicable attempt was also made to

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Imran Khan reiterates demand for elections

BUREAU REPORT

MULTAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Friday reiterated his demand for early elections in the country. Addressing the South Punjab PTI workers convention here, he said a special campaign was being launched to motivate the people and urged his party leaders to visit their constituencies for the purpose. He said he would give a call for a march towards Islamabad to press for early elections, which were the only solution for the issues being faced by the country. He said his movement was not for his party, but for the sovereignty of

Continued on Page 06

Imran Khan visits Chinese Embassy

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan Friday visited the Chinese Embassy to meet the Charge d Affaires of China and offered his condolences on the Karachi University van blast. According to details, the former Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed deep sorrow and grief over the incident.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan writing condolence message during his visit to Chinese Embassy. - DNA



MADINA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif offering Friday Prayer at Prophet's Mosque. - DNA

Doors of Roza e Rasool opened for PM Shehbaz

NEWS DESK

MADINA MUNAWARA, Apr 29 (APP): The government of Saudi Arabia Friday night opened the doors of Roza e Rasool (PBUH) for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation. The prime minister along with his delegation went inside the Roza e Rasool and recited Darood o Salam. The prime minister also offered feteha at the resting places of Hazrat Abu Bakar Siddique (RA) and Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA).

No chance of sighting moon on Sunday

PMD said climate data also shows that the weather is expected to be fairly cloudy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said Friday that the new moon of Shawwal, 1443 AH, may not be sighted on the evening of May 1. The new moon will be born on May 1, a statement from the meteorological department said. "The new moon of Shawwal, 1443 AH, will be born on the crossing conjunction point at 01:28am PST on 01-05-2022," PMD said. PMD said climate data also shows that the weather is expected to be fairly cloudy in most parts of the country on Sunday, which would result in low visibility. Therefore, considering the astronomical parameters, there is no chance of sighting the new moon on the 29th of Ramadan, 1443 AH, the meteorological department said.

NA speaker to administer oath to Punjab CM-elect

The Lahore High Court issued the nine-page written verdict; Govt to file intra-court appeal

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday directed National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf to administer the oath to Punjab Chief Minister-elect Hamza Shehbaz today (Saturday) at 11:30am. The court issued the nine-page written verdict after the PML-N leader sought its intervention for a third time over his oath-taking process. Earlier, Hamza had filed a petition seeking the administration of oath to him by "a person nominated by the court" owing to the "defiant attitude" of President Arif Alvi and the province's governor, Omar Sarfraz Cheema. At the outset of the hearing, Justice Jawad Hassan asked about the order passed by the LHC JC.



'Courts will open at 3am for constitution'

COURT REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) Chief Justice Athar Minallah on Friday said that if the matter is related to the Constitution or the oppressed class, the courts will open at 3am. His remarks came during the hearing of a petition against the harassment of anchorperson Arshad Sharif. Sharif's lawyer Faisal Chaudhry appeared on behalf of the petitioner. At the outset of the hearing, IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah asked while addressing Sharif and his lawyer Faisal Chaudhry if they had watched Kashif Abbas's programme. He said that remarks were made without

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Scores injured after Israeli police storm Al Aqsa Mosque

Israel's incursions into the site during Ramadan have raised global concern

NEWS DESK

JERUSALEM: Fresh clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound injured 42 people on Friday, the Palestinian Red Crescent said, following weeks of violence at the flashpoint site. The unrest came on the final Friday in the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. None of the injuries were serious, the Red Crescent said, adding that 22 people had been taken to hospital. Israel's police said forces entered the compound after "rioters" hurled stones and fireworks, including down toward the Western Wall, the sacred Jewish site below Al-Aqsa.

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Pakistan condemns Israeli raid on Al-Aqsa Mosque

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns today's raid by Israeli forces on Al Aqsa Mosque on Jumma'tul-Wida in the holy month of Ramadan, resulting in injuries to many innocent Palestinian worshippers. It is reprehensible that nearly 300 Palestinians have been injured over the past two weeks in Israeli attacks at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The indiscriminate use of force by Israeli occupation forces

against defenceless Palestinians defies all humanitarian norms and human rights laws. Such attacks, in addition to causing injury to the Palestinians, violate the sanctity of Islamic holy sites. Pakistan calls upon the international community to take urgent action to put an end to the Israeli violations, which continue to fuel violence, tension and instability in the region, and remain a matter of grave concern for the entire Muslim world.

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Rice cultivation must start after May 20

FAISALABAD: The Agriculture Department has advised farmers to start cultivation of rice after May 20 and complete it by end of June for getting good yield. A spokesman for the department told APP on Friday that the best time for cultivation of rice varieties AARI-6, KS-282, KSK-133 and NIAB AARI-9 fall between May 25 to June 7, whereas Super Basmati could be cultivated from May 25 to June 20. He said that June 1 to 20 was the best time for cultivation of Basmati-370, Basmati-385, Basmati Pak, Basmati-2000 and Basmati-515. Similarly, Basmati-198 could be cultivated in the areas of Sahiwal and Okara from June 1 to 15 while the suitable time for cultivation of Shaheen Basmati was June 15 to 30, the spokesman added. He said that average rice production was about 22 maunds per acre in Pakistan whereas in other countries its per acre yield was double or triple compared with Pakistan. He advised farmers to use latest technology for cultivation and harvesting rice crop in addition to applying balanced fertilizers and in-time watering. - APP

Al-Quds day observed; solidarity expressed with Palestinians

PESHAWAR: Like other parts of the country, International Mutaahida Ulama-o-Mashaikh Council here on Friday observed Al Quds day across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and expressed solidarity with Palestinians. Mass rallies were carried out after Jumma prayer and condemned US decision to relocate its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and recent spate of killings of Palestinians by the Zionist Regime. In this regard a protest rally was held on Sunehri Masjid road in which workers of political parties, religious groups and human rights organisations participated. They were holding banners inscribed with slogans in support of Palestinians and denounced the Zionist aggression against Palestine. During rallies angry protesters also torched US and Zionist regime flags and chanted slogans against them. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Defence Committee Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed speaking on the occasion of Al Quds day event organized by the Iranian embassy. Ambassador of Iran Ali Hosseini, former Mayor Islamabad Sheikh Anser Aziz, Syeda Khanum and Raja Nasir Abbas also present on the stage. The speakers expressed solidarity with the people of Palestine and called for an independent State of Palestine. - DNA

Smooth supply of petrol and diesel should be ensured

Faisalabad: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad chairs a meeting of Oil Marketing Companies regarding Diesel issue

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad held an important meeting with oil marketing companies (OMCs) regarding availability and sale of diesel at petrol pumps. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Qaiser Abbas Rind, DO Industries Shahbaz Khan and other officials were also present in the meeting. The strategy for dealing was considered to break out crisis of Diesel and the Deputy Commissioner apprised the oil marketing companies about the stock and supply of the past few days. He said that the supply to diesel at petrol pumps should not be limited to paperwork. He asked the ACs to check the availability and supply record of diesel at the depots along with the pumps. The Deputy Commissioner asked the officials of the companies to refrain from hoarding of diesel in view of wider public interest and wheat procurement drive so that the target of procurement of wheat was met and full availability of flour could be ensured in next month. He cleared that the machinery of district administration is also active for checking petrol pumps and if any disturbance is found in any pump then strict legal action will be taken. The Deputy Commissioner stressed on the need to prepare teshil wise details of the supply of diesel to the pumps by the oil marketing companies. In order to overcome the crisis, the supply of diesel to barrel/ cabins and mini tankers will be banned, while within 20 Kg



drums/ cabins could be sold open and which will also be monitored and the non-compliant petrol pump owner will go to jail. He directed the Assistant Commissioners to keep a close

watch on the pumps, bring the elements involved in hoarding to book and send those who do not sell stocks to jail. The members of the oil marketing companies reiterated their

commitment to work with the district administration to overcome the diesel crisis and said that they would not allow a diesel crisis to arise in the district.

Police encounter: 3 dacoits killed, ASI martyred

FAISALABAD: Three dacoits were killed while an Assistant Sub Inspector (ASI) was martyred during a police encounter in the area of Madina Town police station. Police spokesman said on Friday that three bandits stormed in the house Assistant Sub Inspector Hamid Naseer for robbery. The ASI resisted the robbery bid and informed Madina Town police. The police party reached the spot and directed the robbers to surrender but they opened fire on the police team which led to cross firing. During this encounter, three dacoits received serious bullet injuries and killed on the spot. One of them was identified as Tanveer Hussain son of Muhammad Jahangir Khan resident of Chak 648-GB who was wanted to the police in 44 cases of dacoity, robbery, murder and thefts. The second was identified as Sajjad Ahmad son of Jahangir resident of Chak 648-GB who was wanted to the police in 25 cases of dacoity, robbery, murder and theft whereas the third one was identified as Mubashir Hussain son of Abdul Shakkor who was involved in heinous crimes in other districts. ASI Hamid Naseer also received serious bullet injuries and was rushed to hospital where he expired. The police took bodies into custody and started investigation after registering a case. - APP

43 shopkeepers fined over profiteering

FAISALABAD: The price control magistrates imposed Rs. 79,000 fine on 43 shopkeepers on the charge of profiteering in the district during the past 12 hours. A spokesman for the administration said on Friday that price control magistrates inspected 957 shops in different markets and bazaars of Faisalabad and found dozens of shopkeepers involved in profiteering and overcharging. They imposed a fine on them and warned that they would be sent behind bars if they did not shun their way of profiteering, he added. - APP

19 prisoners released from Central Jail

FAISALABAD: Nineteen prisoners have been released from Central Jail Faisalabad on personal surety bonds. Additional District & Sessions Judge Raja Zahid Mehmood, along with Civil Judge Muhammad Sajid Bilal, visited the jail on Friday and ordered for release of these prisoners on personal surety bonds. All these prisoners were involved in cases of petty nature. The judges also distributed Eid gifts including clothes, shoes, etc. among the inmates which, a spokesman for Prisons Department said. - APP

Incident at Masjid-e-Nabvi is tragic one: Saad Rafique

LAHORE: Minister for Railways and Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique has said breaching sanctity of Masjid-e-Nabvi (PBUH) and raising slogans is a tragic incident which was planned. Addressing a press conference at the Press Club here on Friday, he said it was an unforgettable crime and Ummah would never forgive the culprits involved in the disgraceful and saddening incident. He said the PML-N and allies would start a protest from tomorrow against this act. Saad Rafique said it was the PTI which insulted parliament, attacked Pakistan Television Vision (PTV) and the prime minister's house, adding that the PTI was a mafia instead of a political party. The minister said when Imran Khan was in power, he victimized the opposition and when he was in the opposition, he violated the constitution and the law. The PTI was creating hurdles to run democratic system smoothly in the country, he added. He said that Imran Khan arrested the opposition leaders but no corruption allegations could be proved against them. - APP

FCCI congratulates Asim Ahmad on becoming Chairman FBR

DNA

FAISALABAD: Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has congratulated Mr. Asim Ahmad on assuming the office of Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) as its chairman for the second time. He said that Mr. Asim Ahmad is a veteran, innovative and versatile tax collector. "He (Asim Ahmad) has vast experience in taxation matters and he has already proved his mettle and capabilities beyond any doubt", he said and added that Mr. Asim Ahmad has already served as chairman FBR and during this short tenure he had the privilege

to introduce revolutionary and people friendly reforms. Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh hoped that he would now fully express his expertise and capabilities to give much needed relief to the export sector in addition to ensuring maximum collection from the domestic sector. He hoped that Mr. Asim Ahmad would also take stakeholders into confidence to broaden the tax base. Mr. Asim would also discard the practice to add burden on the existing taxpayers by introducing uniform, balanced and comprehensive tax reforms. Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh has also invited him to visit FCCI so that the local business community could interact with him and know about his future plans and strategies.

Former FCCI chief hosts Iftar dinner
Syed Zia Alamdar Hussain former President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) and Chief Executive Officer, Fashion & Trends Pvt (Ltd) hosted a sumptuous Iftar dinner. It was participated President FCCI Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh in addition to the local elite and business community. Among other participants also include Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad Mr. Ali Shahzad, former MNA Chaudhary Sher Ali, Dr. Nisar Jutt and Chairman FDA Mr. Latif Nazir. Earlier Syed Zia Alamdar Hussain, Mian Shahid Waheed, Mian Azmat Rubani and Syed Zain-ul-Abidin personally received the guests on behalf of the Fashion & Trends Pvt. (Ltd).

RPO orders tight security on Eid

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Imran Mehmood has directed the police heads of four districts of Faisalabad region to ensure tight security arrangements on the Eidul Fitr 2022. In a statement issued on Friday, he directed the City Police Officer (CPO) Faisalabad and District Police Officers (DPOs) of Jhang, Chiniot and Toba Tek

Singh to depute additional security staff especially at public places on Chaand Raat and Eid days so that nefarious designs of miscreants could be foiled. He said that a large number of people used ATM, money changers and banks during Eid days

whereas the criminals also planned to deprived people of their hard-earned money. Therefore, the police should ensure full safety and security to lives and properties of the public during Eid days. He said that display of weapons, jubilant firing and

one-wheeling were strictly prohibited. Therefore, stern action would be taken against violators during the Eid days, he added. He said that special branch staff should ensure screening of the sites where Eid congregations would be held. In this connection, walk-through gates and metal detectors should also be used, he said and added that teams of Elite force and mobile police should also be kept in reserve to deal with any emergent situation on Eid days. - APP

'Stern action would be taken against violators during the Eid days'

Anti-Israel rallies in IIOJK on Quds Day

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, thousands of people joined the Kashmir Day and Quds Day rallies in different areas of the territory. People took out massive anti-India and anti-Israel rallies in Srinagar, Badgam, Pulwama, Baramulla and other areas of the occupied territory. The participants of the rallies raised high-pitched slogans against India and Israel. Addressing the rallies, the speakers strongly denounced the Indian atrocities in IIOJK and the Israeli brutalities on the innocent people of Palestine. They appealed to the international community to play its role in resolving the lingering disputes of Kashmir and Palestine to mitigate the sufferings of the people of the two regions. - Agencies



PTI Chief using religious card for political gain: Kaira

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira on Friday strongly condemned the fascist behavior and use of religious card by Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-Insaf Imran Khan for his political gain. Addressing a joint press conference along with Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah, he said that Imran Khan was suffering from pride, and consider himself more intelligent who could resolve all issues alone. He said the PTI chief wanted to create rift among nation, and institutions for his personal benefits. Kaira said that the incident of Kohsar Market could not be defended. He criticized the recent meeting of former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar with Imran Khan who he said was a political worker of PTI. The entire world saw the shameful role of PTI, which it had played in Punjab Assembly, he added. - APP

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- 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
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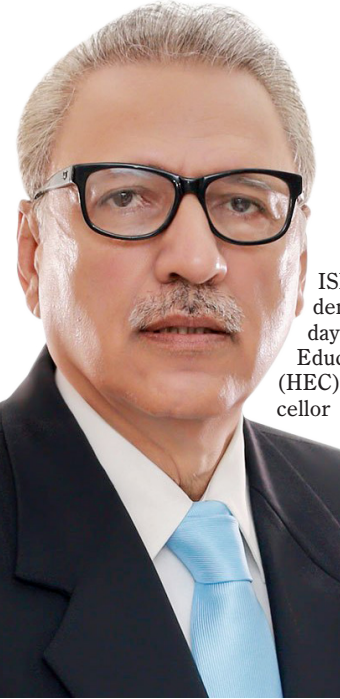
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Alvi directs HEC to help stop students' harassment



The president passed these directions after hearing the grievances of Baloch students in compliance with the IHC Order dated 8 April 2022

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday directed the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and the Vice-Chancellor of Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad to take necessary measures to avoid incidents of harassment and racial profiling of Baloch students at the university campuses.

The president passed these directions after hearing the grievances of Baloch students in compliance with the Islamabad High Court's Order dated 8 April 2022, passed in Writ Petition No. 794 of 2022 asking the President/Chancellor, QAU to ensure that the issues of Baloch students regarding ethnic profiling were probed and a report was submitted before the Court.

The hearings were held at Aiwan-e-Sadr and were attended by Vice-Chancellor

(VC) QAU Prof Dr Muhammad Ali, Additional Secretary Ministry of Interior Muhammad Ayub Chaudhary, and Advocate Imaan Zainab Hazir.

The president said the country faced a unique situation and the resurgence of terrorist activities was a cause of concern.

He added that counter-terrorism efforts were essential to peace and stability, however stressed that these needed to be carried out with utmost care and balance so as to not isolate or profile any segment of the population, particularly the students of Balochistan.

He also directed the VC QAU that in the case of students of Balochistan there was a general sense of deprivation or isolation, therefore, it was incumbent on all educational institutions to take more care to address such sentiments.

He said a proactive programme of activities and debates within the student community should be developed to address feelings of deprivation among Baloch students.

He further asked the VC QAU to diligently monitor

any activity which may be a cause of concern to the Baloch students at QAU and to verify the credentials of visitors in order to check the impersonification and maligning of law enforcement agencies.

Earlier, the President had held hearings on the 20th and 21st of April 2022 with Baloch students where it was informed that a Baloch student had disappeared from his home town in Balochistan after receiving a phone call from an unknown person who asked him to meet another unknown person, at QAU Campus.

8171 SMS service opened to review BISP cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, ShaziaMarri Friday said that 8171 SMS service has been opened to review the cases of the expelled beneficiaries from Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) in the year 2019, addressing their grievances.

"It is very unfortunate that around 8,20,000 beneficiaries were removed from the BISP program (Kafaalat) in the year 2019, without any verification or investigation, by giving an impression that they were ineligible and affluent", she said during an interview with media.

Marri shared that many questions were raised at that time when these beneficiaries were dismissed on the basis of unjustified filters but those responsible during the previous government didn't respond. "I have decided after receiving briefing from the officials that those disqualified on the basis of unjustified filters including phone bill of up to Rs. 1000, making of urgent Passport and urgent CNIC, foreign travel etc must be given a right to appeal", the federal minister announced.

It is beyond comprehension how a person can be declared ineligible if he travels abroad for performing Umrah through some lucky draw and made CNIC in urgency to apply for BISP.

Sherry meets Charge d'Affaires of China, expresses solidarity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Climate Change and Senator Sherry Rehman visited the Chinese Embassy here in Islamabad. According to details, Sherry Rehman called upon Pang Chengxu, Charge d'Affaires of China and strongly condemned the attack on the van transporting Chinese officials. The Pakistan People party (PPP) leader Sherry Rehman expressed solidarity with the Chinese people and their Government and said that she is feels the utmost regret about the incident.

It merits mention here that, At least four people died, including three Chinese nationals in a blast that occurred near a vehicle in the Commerce Department of Karachi University. The victims of the blast include three Chinese nationals and their driver.

Meanwhile, security in charge of the university said that the blast occurred in a vehicle that entered the university premises from outside. The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in-charge Umar Khattab had confirmed the blast at Karachi University to be a



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Climate Change and Senator Sherry Rehman calls on Pang Chengxu, Charge d'Affaires of China at the Chinese Embassy. – DNA

suicide bomb attack. He also mentioned that a banned organization claimed responsibility for the blast. The suicide bomber had explosives inside a bag, as per CTD in-charge. DIG East Muqaddas Haidar stated that more than three kilograms of explosives were used in the blast, adding that traces of explosives including ball bearings could be spotted on

the vehicle. The mentioned vehicle used to visit the university campus at the same time on daily basis, added DIG. Details regarding the foreigners, who became victims of the tragic incident are being collected. The deceased Chinese nationals have been identified as the director of the Confucius Institute Huang Guiping, Ding Mupeng, Chen Sai, and their Pakistani driver, Khalid. It was further revealed that four people also sustained injuries and have been identified as Chinese national Wang Yuqing, a security guard named Hamid and two Rangers personnel Raza and Abdul Rehman. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah took notice of the blast in the van and directed DC East and SP East to reach the spot immediately. Murad Ali Shah demand-

ed a detailed report from Commissioner Karachi. The Chief Minister Sindh said that the injured should be shifted to Dow Hospital immediately and efforts should be made to avoid any loss of life. Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah visited the Chinese Consulate and briefed the Chinese Consul General regarding the van blast at Karachi University. Murad Ali Shah assured

the Consul General of a full investigation into the incident and said that those involved in the blast would be brought to justice. Sindh CM added that we value the services of Chinese experts for the country and the province but some conspiratorial elements do not like the partnership of Pakistan and China, such thinking and roles will be dealt with iron hands.

Govt servants rally in support of Army

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Demonstrations were held in different parts of the country, including Islamabad, in support of Pakistan Army on Friday. Government employees held a demonstration outside the Parliament House in Islamabad to show their support for the army. Carrying banners in their hands, inscribed with pro-army slogans, the participants began their march from the gate number 1 of the Parliament House, shouting slogans of 'Pak Army Zindabad' (Long Live Pak Army).



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran, Mohammad Ali Hosseini calls on Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. – DNA

Lok Virsa arranges Eid Bazaar for people

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage LokVirsa has arranged special Eid Bazaar for the people to buy different items with wide range including chunri, traditional paranday, khussay, jewellery, handmade embroidery, mehndi, traditional bangles adding colors to festivities in the federal capital.

Talking to APP on Sunday, senior official LokVirsa AnwarulHaq said that from bangle makers to henna artists, the Eid Bazaar included almost everything people look for ahead of Eid. The festival focuses on female glass bangle makers from Hyderabad, art and craft bazaar, garments and henna stalls, artisans' displays and other attractions, he said.

He also told that fun lovers including youngsters termed the festival an excellent recreation and shopping opportunity, saying that the overall ambience of the festival was different from typical shopping. He said that Eid related products serving the people with taste of their traditional heritage are being presented. The event will continue till Chand Raat, he added. – APP

IT Minister directs timely completion of all projects

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin UIHaque has directed the heads of the attached departments of the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication to complete all the ongoing projects speedily and on time.

He was chairing a meeting to discuss the present status of the PSDP Projects FY 2021-22 of Ministry of IT and its attached departments held here on Friday. The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary (Incharge) Ministry of IT & Telecom MohsinMush-taq, senior officers of the Ministry, and heads of the attached departments of the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT).

During the meeting, IT Minister Syed Amin UIHaque was given detailed briefing on the ongoing IT projects, and funds allocated for these projects and its utilization. The representatives of NITB, PITB, Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB), Special Communications Organization (SCO), NTC, Virtual University (VU) and IT Wing of MoITT briefed the chair about their respective projects. – APP

Business community welcomes DC's appointment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industries Chairman Muhammad Khurshid Barlas congratulated the newly appointed Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Irfan Nawaz Memon on his appointment. Accompanied by a delegation comprising Senior Vice Chairman Aammad Rasheed, Vice Chairman Faad Waheed, Sheikh Rehan-ur-Rehman, Rehan Tariq, Faisal Muhammad Younis Bantva, Wali Muhammad, Amin-ur-Rehman. Sadia Zia, Anam Qazi, Mohsin Khalid and Shamriz Iqbal, he was called on Deputy Commissioner Irfan Nawaz Memon at his office Friday. According to a press statement, he reiterated that his appoint-

ment would be a welcome development for the business community of Islamabad. On this occasion, the Deputy Commissioner assured that he would extend his fullest cooperation for the welfare of the business community & Pakistan Association

of Exhibition Industry is playing an important role in the economic development of Pakistan and is striving to organize

successful exhibitions in different cities of Pakistan. In the end, Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industries



Briefs

Railways
instruct
to tighten
security

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways Police has issued instructions to all Superintendent of Police (SP) Railways to tighten security in trains as well as at stations to avoid any untoward incident during Eid-ul-Fitr days. The department had directed all SPs Railways to depute sufficient force at exit and entry points of all railway stations and strict watch to be carried out of suspicious persons, an official in the Ministry said in a media interview Friday. Pakistan Railways Police Commando Force would be deputed at vulnerable installations and in trains, while bomb disposal staff would also be kept on alert for search of luggage and passengers at railway stations. "The SPs Railways directed to conduct complete check and search of empty rakes before trains reach the platforms for departure for their destinations," the official added. All the SPs Railways would also be directed to remain present on Eid holidays and randomly check trains, stations and escorting staff. The official said the number of passengers was increasing day by day at railway stations and trains ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr and the Railway administration had arranged special trains across the country to facilitate the extra passengers. It was pertinent to mention here that Pakistan Railways has decided to run two Eid special trains from Karachi to Peshawar and Lahore on April 29 and 30, respectively for the convenience of the commuters on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr.

Hajj may
cost Rs 700k
to Rs1m
this year:
Minister

ISLAMABAD: Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Minister Mufti Abdul Shaqoor on Friday, giving a tentative figure, informed that Hajj may cost Rs 700,000 to Rs 1 million this year. Addressing a press conference here in the ministry, he said due to increase in the cost of services and taxes by the Saudi government, an increment would be expected in the Hajj expenses. Mufti said the Saudi Hajj ministry as per normal routine used to provide Hajj guidelines and expenditures in advance but due to COVID-19, the details of hajj expenses were being awaited. In this context, the ministry's directorate general in Jeddah was in constantly contact with his Saudi counterpart to settle down the issues of mutual interests as soon as possible, he added. He said the Saudi Hajj ministry had given the deadline of May 16, to complete all the codal formalities for smooth sailing of Hajj 2022. Keeping in view the time constraints and official hiccups, the ministry had decided to ask the aspirant pilgrims to submit their applications in designated branches of the schedule banks with token money of Rs 50,000, he added. — APP

Dist admin
prepared for
tourist influx

ABBOTTABAD: Abbottabad is a tourist destination and a large number of people from all over the country visit this region to celebrate Eid which requires special measures for traffic management and the provision of facilities to the citizens. Moreover, on the eve of Eid-ul-Fitr provincial government has declared May 2-6 a public holiday which would also attract tourists to visit. Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Tariq Salam Marwat while chairing a meeting discussed issues related to tourist arrivals, security situations and traffic management. Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad District Police, TMA, GDA, and all agencies to work together and instructed to provide information booklets on all main routes, and highways for tourist awareness. In order to control the influx of tourists, instructions were issued to TMA Abbottabad regarding the provision of facilities to tourists and traffic management at Shimla Hill Park. — APP

Mushahid urges review
of 'faulty security system'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain led a delegation of Senate Defence Committee to the Chinese Embassy for expression of sorrow, solidarity and support following the terror strike against Chinese teachers in Karachi. The delegation was received by the Acting Ambassador, Madame Pang Chunxue and her senior colleagues. Senator Mushahid Hussain said the delegation was visiting the Embassy with a heavy heart as this was the 3rd act of terror against the Chinese in Pakistan within a year. And that Chinese teachers were target was quite shameful.

He said all political parties in Parliament shared these sentiments as China is Pakistan's paramount partner and strongest friend, a friendship that has widespread support from the people of Pakistan. Senator Mushahid Hussain expressed regret that 'our security system has failed, both, to protect the Chinese working in Pakistan or to prevent recurrence of such acts of terror'. He said 'a comprehensive review and rethink of such a faulty system is needed' if 'we went CPEC to move forward successfully'. He said 'such a breach of security is unacceptable' for a country like Pakistan whose armed forces successfully overcame an inland war against terrorism. He said 'we fully share in your sorrow, we fully share in your indignation and we fully share your concerns about this serious security lapse', which, if al-



Senator Mushahid Hussain (l) and Acting Ambassador Madame Pang Chunxue (r) are seen during a meeting at the Chinese Embassy in Islamabad. The delegation included Senators Mushtaq Ahmed, Faisal Javed, Anwarul Haq Kakar and Dr Zarqa Suhrwardhy. Secretary of DefCom, Major (r) Hasnain Haider was also present. The Chinese Acting Ambassador profusely thanked the

Senators for their gesture. Incidentally, this was the first visit by a Parliamentary Committee to the Chinese Embassy since the terror strike in Karachi.

Anti-state anarchists
instigating people
against state

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The hostile powers are using the anti-state anarchists in Balochistan as an instrument to instigate the masses against state and state institutions for impeding the development projects. The anti-state elements like the Baloch Liberation Front is dissuading the youths in Balochistan from enrollment in Counter Terrorism Department Police Balochistan. In their statements, such militant organizations are negatively portraying the role of the security agencies just to pollute the minds of the poor and innocent masses and to deprive them from getting mainstreamed. Moreover, they had also been engaged in waging armed insurgency including terrorist acts since a decade or so. Balochistan has seen insurgencies driven by hostile powers through various storylines wherein anti-state anarchists act as mouth piece of the hostile powers.

the suicide attack, in sheer contrast of Islamic teachings. Similarly, the Recently Baloch Liberation (BLF) has released a press statement to dissuade Baloch youth from enrollment in Counter Terrorism Department Police Balochistan. In their statements, such militant organizations are negatively portraying the role of the security agencies just to pollute the minds of the poor and innocent masses and to deprive them from getting mainstreamed. Moreover, they had also been engaged in waging armed insurgency including terrorist acts since a decade or so. Balochistan has seen insurgencies driven by hostile powers through various storylines wherein anti-state anarchists act as mouth piece of the hostile powers.

'Supporters' of
Shahzain Bugti attack
Qasim Suri

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The supporters of Shahzain Bugti, President of Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) and Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, allegedly attacked former National Assembly deputy speaker Qasim Suri at a private hotel in Islamabad in retaliation of what happened to Shahzain in Madinah.

The attack came shortly after Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his coterie of ministers were catcalled and jeered at allegedly by the supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) at Masjid-e-Nabawi (Prophet's Mosque) in Madinah. Epithets like "chor chor" (thieves), traitors and beggars were hurled at them by the protesters. Meanwhile, on the request of the former

Deputy Speaker of National Assembly Qasim Suri, the case has been registered in the Kohsar Police Station over the last night incident. According to the former Speaker Qasim Suri, he was waiting for sehri sitting at the restaurant at the Kohsar Market. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader also said that there some people came who were against his party, they attacked him. Qasim Suri further stated that the people who attacked them wanted to kill him. According to Qasim Khan Suri, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) activists and guards of Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Shahzain Bugti carried out attack on him when he along with some guests reached a hotel located at Kohsar Market for Sehri.

Swedish envoy, Sherry
discuss climate change

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Sweden Henrik Persson called on Federal Minister on Climate Change Sherry Rehman and offered all-out support to help Pakistan overcome environmental challenges and mitigate climate change risks, according to press release issued from the Ministry of Climate Change. During the meeting held here at the minister's office on Friday, the Swedish ambassador said that his government is aware of Pakistan's climate-vulnerability and scale of the risk exposure from climate risks to the lives and livelihoods of the people in general and agriculture, which is backbone of the country's economy, in particular. The ambassador informed the minister

Sherry Rehman that his government has initiated joint programmes with governments in developing countries, where people, their livelihoods and various socio-economic sectors are increasingly exposed to climate shocks, particularly floods, depleting groundwater resources, crop failures, potable water shortages, energy supplies. The Swedish envoy expressed his government's intents to jointly work with Pakistan in dealing with the latter's environmental challenges, water shortages by recycling domestic wastewater for its re-use for various purposes including agriculture. The federal minister Sherry Rehman welcomed the generous offer by the Swedish ambassador for collaboration in renewable energy, wastewater treatment, e-vehicles, disaster risk management, climate resilience. She told the ambassador that the incumbent government is very much committed to

achieving environmental development and enhanced climate resilience. However, any opportunity of collaboration with the Swedish government to achieve to mitigate Pakistan's environmental challenges and climate risks is encouraging. "We would, surely, jointly work with the Swedish government and welcome its any support in transferring technical know-how and building technical capacity of relevant stakeholders that support the implementation of the country's green policies," the federal Minister Sherry Rehman told the ambassador. Earlier, the Swedish ambassador informed the minister that this year his country is hosting the World Environment Day, marked every year on June 5 globally. He said that various activities have been planned by his embassy that will happen in Islamabad. The ambassador also invited the minister to join the World Environment Day celebrations.

8000 MW of power shortfall in country

ISLAMABAD: The power plants are still not provided by the required amount of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Furnace Oil still causing a national shortfall of electricity. Amid sizzling hot weather, Power outages have severely hit Pakistan during the holy month of Ramadan as Pakistan is have been suffering more than 12 hours of power load-shedding. All urban centers, such as Karachi, Hyderabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Fais-

alabad, and Sialkot have been severely hit with more than half a day consumed by load-shedding and rural areas with more than 12 hours. Power shortfall has crossed 8500 megawatts due to technical problems and shortage of fuel in the power-plants all across the country. According to details, the hydropower generation is also facing downfall due to low level of water in the dams around the country which have added to the electricity shortfall. Meanwhile, the un-

announced load-shedding of electricity has made it a living hell for the people of the country in the holy month of Ramadan. The sources revealed that the total production of electricity is maintained at 18700 megawatts whereas the demand of electricity has reached 27200 megawatts. The prolonged load-shedding has continued to increase the miseries of the public, causing difficulties to perform daily chores, especially during sehri and iftar times. — DNA

Four outlaws
held; looted
cash and
bikes
recovered

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have arrested 04 accused involved in numerous crime including snatching and bike lifting in different areas of the city and recovered looted cash and five stolen bikes from their possession, a police spokesman said. He said that, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas had ordered crackdown against criminals including those involved in street crimes and bike lifting incidents and to recover the valuables. Following the orders, a police team headed by SHO Noon Adeel Shoukat along with ASI Fakhar Iqbal and officials signaled to stop a suspicious motorbike during special checking in Jhangji Syedan. Police team recovered two pistols from the accused and registered separate cases.

During preliminary investigation, the accused confessed their involvement in numerous incidents of snatching in areas of Noon police station. Police team also recovered looted cash and mobile phones from their possession. The accused have been sent to jail for identification parade in two cases. Furthermore, a Margalla police team headed by SHO Margalla Khurram Shehzad with other officials arrested two bike lifters identified as Inayat Ullah and Asim Mehmood. Police team also recovered five stolen bikes from their possession. The accused have confessed to lift the bikes from Centaurus mall parking and F-8 Kacheri. The accused Inayat Ullah is previous record holder, further investigation is underway.

PTI to topple
present govt
within 8-10
weeks: Fawad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) central leader Fawad Chaudhry has claimed that they will topple the present government within eight to 10 weeks. Fawad Chaudhry made the statement while talking to journalists at an iftar dinner event alongside Qasim Suri and Zulfi Bukhari. Criticising the present government, the former information minister said that Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari has merged his political party into Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N). Fawad hinted at the next political moves of the PTI, saying that there is a lot to come next before going for organising a sit-in. Qasim Suri told journalists that Imran Khan raised his voice for the sovereignty and dignity of the Pakistani nation and he rejected granting NRO to the corrupt political parties. He said that the young generation of the country is rejecting the 'imported government' in Pakistan. Earlier on Wednesday, Imran Khan had reiterated his call to the nation to get ready for his call to launch a long march toward Islamabad. Addressing the PTI workers' convention in Lahore, Imran Khan had said that his party will observe Ramadan 27 (a possible Shab-e-Qadr) as "Shab-e-Dua" (Night of Prayers) and urged all Pakistanis to join PTI's Shab-e-Dua for the 'real freedom of Pakistan'.

IG Punjab
lauds RPO
& CPO
Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: Inspector General (IG) of Police Punjab Rao Sardar Ali Khan Friday praised the performance of Rawalpindi Police in its excellent performance in protection of life and property of citizens and crime control. IG Punjab while chairing video link Regional Police Officers (RPOs) conference said that under the leadership of RPO Rawalpindi Ashfaq Ahmad Khan and CPO Rawalpindi Omar Saeed Malik, Rawalpindi Police was performing its duties of crime control and protection of life and property of citizens in an efficient manner, said a news release. — APP

Int'l inflation impacting economic activities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Although the economic recovery is underway, the international developments and persistent high domestic inflation might impact domestic economic activities, says Monthly Economic Update and Outlook, April 2022 released here on Friday. "The domestic and international scenario is changing over the course of time. Thus, inflationary, and external sectors risks are building macroeconomic imbalances," notes the report released by Finance Ministry. Among the determining factors of current trends in both international and domestic inflation are supply chain issues and surging international commodity prices. It says, under normal circumstances, these prices follow a cyclical pattern; implies that normally, price spikes are followed by a cooling-off period. But, it adds, the current cycles of international food and oil prices were different as the volatility in the markets is high compared to historical standards. Second, due to geo-political tensions, the increasing trend in prices may remain intact. The high inflation and the accompanying monetary policy reaction may temporarily dampen

the cyclical position of Pakistan's economy thereby reducing growth prospects in the short run. But in the long-run, Pakistan's productive capacity will determine the growth as well as employment prospects, it says adding this required a substantial upward shift in the propensity to invest and of the productivity of investment expenditures. Stimulating the propensity to invest implies that a larger share of the income that the country generates is used to finance Gross Fixed Capital Formation. Structural policies are to be further designed to attract more productive investments from foreign sources (Foreign Direct Investments) and from both private and public domestic investors. High international commodity prices not only keep inflation elevated, they are also a burden on Pakistan's external account and hence on its foreign exchange reserves. Many other countries are facing the consequences of high and volatile commodity prices, especially oil and gas prices, it observes. Strengthening of Pakistan's overall supply side through increasing its productive potential would allow it to produce more for exports and to discourage import. These prospects would relax the external constraint that has historically weighed on Pakistan's economy and which has caused

regular Balance of Payments crises and an accompanying stop-and-go profile in Pakistan's economic growth path. While reviewing the performance of April 2022, the report observes that Pakistan's economy was on growth trajectory confronting risks of inflation and external sectors pressures. It says, the production of all major Kharif crops increased compared to last year's production while during July-March FY2022, the agriculture credit disbursement increased by 0.5 percent to Rs 958.3 billion compared to Rs 953.7 billion in same period last year. During Jul-Feb FY 2022, LSM witnessed the growth of 7.8 percent against the growth of 2.2 percent same period last year. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation was recorded at 10.8 percent during Jul-Mar compared to 8.3 percent in the same period of last year while CPI for the March 2022 was recorded at 12.7 percent on YoY basis against 9.1 percent in March 2021. The overall spike in CPI is on account of increased in the prices of imported items, as the country is a net importer of items especially crude oil, pulses and edible oil which ultimately transmitted into domestic prices. Upward price movement is further fueled by Russia Ukraine war, supply chain disruption and recovery in global demand.

During the first nine months of the current fiscal year, the fiscal deficit stood at 4.0 percent of GDP against 3.0 percent of GDP (on the basis of revised GDP) last year. Similarly, the primary balance posted a deficit of Rs 447.2 billion (-0.7 percent of GDP) as compared to surplus of Rs 451.8 billion (0.8 percent of GDP). The provisional net tax collection during Jul-Mar FY2022 grew by 28.9 percent to stand at Rs 4,375.6 billion against Rs 3,393.7 billion in the same period of last year. During the first nine months of the current fiscal year, FBR exceeded its revenue target by 5.8 percent. In Jul-Mar, FDI reached \$ 1,285.1 million (\$ 1,311.1 million last year) decreased by 2.0 percent. In March net outflow was recorded at \$ 30.4 million, on account of political instability which resulted in change of regime. In Jul-Mar FY2022, workers' remittances reached \$ 23.0 billion (\$ 21.4 billion last year), increased by 7.1 percent. Workers' remittances continued their unprecedented run of above \$ 2.0 billion since June 2020. Pakistan's total liquid foreign exchange reserves stood at \$ 16.8 billion on April 20, 2022, with the SBP's reserves recorded at \$ 10.6 billion, while commercial banks' reserves remained at \$ 6.2 billion.

Ukraine war: stakes rise higher

STEADILY, ominously, the stakes are rising in the confrontation that Vladimir Putin's brutal invasion of Ukraine has provoked with the west. Russia's state energy company Gazprom halted gas supplies to two EU member states – Poland and Bulgaria – on Wednesday and warned that more countries could be similarly targeted. Poland, with good reason, described this as a "direct attack". Moscow is also talking darkly of delivering a "proportionate response" to the demonisation of Russia by western governments. On Tuesday, Mr Putin's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, accused Nato of "engaging in a war with Russia through a proxy". The risk of nuclear escalation, he said, was becoming "considerable".

Economic warfare and apocalyptic threats can be read as signs of Russia's bitter frustration at the way events have unfolded since February. The scale and practical value of western solidarity with Ukraine – in the form of sanctions, financial aid and military assistance – have come as an unpleasant surprise to the Kremlin. The humiliating failure of Mr Putin's initial plan to capture Kyiv and topple the Ukrainian government was down to the bravery and skill of those who fought to defend their country. But external military assistance was crucial in giving the country's armed forces sufficient means to resist.

As the focus of the Kremlin's campaign shifts to the eastern Donbas region and southern Ukraine, that support is continuing and adapting to the likely circumstances of a more attritional phase of the war. The US has announced a £600m package of military and financial aid that will include more advanced western weapons as well as non-Nato ammunition for Soviet-made tanks and artillery. Britain has indicated that it may send howitzers and anti-aircraft systems. Helping Ukraine defend itself is the right thing to do. But as the foreign secretary, Liz Truss, calls for western powers to escalate intervention still further and provide fighter jets to Ukraine, MrScholz's initial reservations are worth recalling. In an interview with Der Spiegel, he argued that "everything must be done to avoid a direct military confrontation between Nato and a highly armed superpower like Russia". So far, the west has managed to balance caution and assistance to good effect, emphasising the defensive nature of the support it has offered Kyiv. But there are some signs, rhetorically at least, of needless escalation.

Equally, to "double down" in the way Ms Truss proposes would ratchet up the risks in a context that is becoming more, not less, volatile – as recent explosions in Transnistria, a pro-Russian separatist region of Moldova, testify. If the UK goes down this path, it should only be after the fullest consultation with parliament and an honest public debate about the dilemmas and uncertainties involved. Russia's nuclear threats are a sign of the Kremlin's desperation, but they also illustrate the frighteningly high stakes in the most serious conflict on European soil since the second world war.

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Don't forget the Afghan refugees

THE Biden administration has established a sponsorship program to help admit and support tens of thousands of Ukrainian refugees, but too many Afghan evacuees, including some who helped U.S. troops and personnel, have been left without adequate support in this country or spurned altogether. For many of the 80,000 or so Afghans who made it to the United States after the fall of Kabul last year, the challenges they face in acclimating to a new country are mounting. Thousands of others still in Afghanistan or nearby countries have been denied entry to the United States or wait in limbo. Congress could help but has not.

Most Afghans who arrived here were airlifted from Kabul during last summer's chaotic U.S. withdrawal, then housed in temporary quarters at military bases. They have since been resettled in communities across the country, but often without the financial and logistical support normally accorded refugees by the government. That's because Afghans, including thousands who assisted our troops and risked their lives doing so over years, have not been granted refugee status – and because the Trump administration gutted the infrastructure for resettling refugees.

In March, the Biden administration offered temporary protected status (TPS) for 18 months to Afghan refugees who had already been admitted, a designation that can be and often is extended. It did so after announcing the same benefit for Ukrainians already here. TPS also comes with work authorization, but it provides no pathway to legal permanent residence or citizenship. Without those gateways, many Afghans are effectively stateless, unable to return to their country and uncertain of their long-term prospects in this one.

Meanwhile, there are tens of thousands of unluckier Afghans who did not manage to board a flight to the United States last summer. Many remain in Afghanistan, at risk from the Taliban; others are in nearby countries. About 45,000 have requested humanitarian parole to come to the United States, overwhelming Washington's processing capacity. Only a few hundred have been approved; 2,200 have been denied, while the rest remain in limbo.

That raises a question: Why can't the administration stand up a program for U.S.-based individuals and groups to sponsor Afghan refugees to come here, as it has done for Ukrainians? Or why can't it streamline admissions processing for Afghans who helped U.S. personnel, escaped their country and want to come here? After all, many are as qualified as the refugees admitted en masse last summer.

Congress has not moved to grant a path to citizenship for Afghan refugees, as it did for Cubans after Fidel Castro took power, Vietnamese following Saigon's fall and Iraqis after the wars in Iraq of recent decades. Many Afghan refugees, having worked side by side assisting Americans in a dangerous place, might now wonder whether they have a future in this country.

Contesting Russia requires renewed US engagement in Central Asia

James Dorsey

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are, alongside Kazakhstan, members of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which Mr. Putin, referring to Kazakhstan, described as a bulwark that "helps them stay within the so-called 'greater Russian world,' which is part of world civilization"

WHEN US Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III declared that Washington wanted to see Russia so "weakened" that it would no longer be able to invade a neighbouring state, he lifted the veil on US goals in Ukraine. He also held out the prospect of a long-term US-Russian contest for power and influence. Mr. Austin's remarks were problematic on several fronts. For one, they legitimised Russian President Vladimir Putin's justification of the invasion of Ukraine as a defence against US-led efforts to box Russia in and potentially undermine his regime. "US policy toward Russia continues to be plagued by lack of rhetorical discipline. First calling for regime change, now goal of weakening Russia. This only increases Putin's case for escalating & shifts focus away from Russian actions in Ukraine & toward Russia-US/NATO showdown," tweeted New York-based Council of Foreign Relations president and former senior State Department official Richard Haas. Mr. Haas was referring to President Joe Biden's remark last month, which he subsequently walked back, that Mr. Putin "cannot remain in power."

Leaving aside that Mr. Austin's remark was inopportune, it also suggested a lack of vision of what it will take to ensure that Mr. Putin does not repeat his Ukraine operation elsewhere in the former Soviet Union. That is an endeavour that would involve looking beyond Ukraine to foster closer ties with former Soviet republics that do not immediately border Ukraine.

One place to look is Kazakhstan, a potential future target if Russia still has the wherewithal after what has become a draining slug in Ukraine. Mr. Putin has long set Kazakhstan up as a potential future target. He has repeatedly used language when it comes to Kazakhstan that is similar to his rhetoric on the artificial character of the Ukrainian state. Referring to his notion of a Russian world whose boundaries are defined by the presence of Russian speakers and adherents to Russian culture rather than its internationally recognised borders, Mr. Putin asserted last December that "Kazakhstan is a Russian-speaking country in the full sense of the word." Mr. Putin first sent a chill down Kazakh spines eight years ago when a student asked him nine months after the annexation of Crimea whether Kazakhstan, with a 6,800 kilometre-long border with Russia, the world's second-longest frontier, risked a fate similar to that of Ukraine. In response, Mr. Putin noted that then-president Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kazakhstan's Soviet-era Communist party boss, had "performed a unique feat: he has created a state on a territory where there has never been a state. The Kazakhs never had a state of their own, and he created it."

To be sure, Russian troops invited in January by Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to help put down anti-government protests were quick to withdraw from the Central Asian nation once calm had been restored. Mr. Putin's remarks, coupled with distrust of China fuelled by the repression of Turkic Muslims, including ethnic Kazakhs, in the north-western province of Xinjiang, and the shutdown of Russia's Black Sea Novorossiysk oil terminal, Kazakhstan's main Caspian oil export route, creates an opportunity for the United States. Last month, Kazakhstan abstained in a United Nations General Assembly vote

that condemned Russia for its invasion of Ukraine. Since then, its sovereign wealth fund announced that it would no longer do business in rubles in compliance with US and European sanctions against Russia. This week, Kazakhstan stopped production of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine against Covid-19.

In an apparent effort to stir the pot, Russian media accused Kazakhstan of preventing Russian nationals from expressing support for Mr. Putin's invasion and firing Kazakhs who supported the Russian president's actions from their jobs. At the same time, opponents of the war were allowed to stage demonstrations. Supporting Kazakhstan would involve a renewed US engagement in Central Asia, a key region that constitutes Russia as well as China's backyard. The United States is perceived to have abandoned the region with its withdrawal from Afghanistan last August. It would also mean enlarging the figurative battlefield to include not only military and financial support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia but also the strengthening of political and economic ties with former Soviet republics such as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are, alongside Kazakhstan, members of the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), which Mr. Putin, referring to Kazakhstan, described as a bulwark that "helps them stay within the so-called 'greater Russian world,' which is part of world civilization." As a result, Uzbekistan appears to have reversed its ambition to join the EEU and forge closer ties to the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), the region's Russian-led military alliance. "The way Central Asia thinks about Russia has changed. While before, Russia was seen as a source of stability, it now seems that its presence in a very sensitive security dimension has become a weakness for regional stability, sovereignty, and territorial integrity," said Carnegie Endowment Central Asia scholar Temur Umarov. "I think that Central Asian governments will seek to minimise the influence of Russia, which will be difficult to do, but they have no choice since it has become an unpredictable power," Mr. Umarov predicted.

UN remains relevant despite Ukraine difficulties

Andrew Hammond

This has fueled criticism, including from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who has called for Russia to be expelled from the Security Council

WESTERN countries and corporations' unexpectedly strong rebuke of Russia following its invasion of Ukraine has surprised many, but now, two months into the conflict, the UN is facing growing criticism of its multilateral efforts to secure peace.

To date, more than 30 countries representing more than 50 percent of the global economy have levied sanctions against Moscow. Moreover, some 500 corporations have ended or reduced their business ties with Russia by withdrawing, suspending, scaling back or buying time by postponing planned investment, development or marketing while continuing substantive business. Meanwhile, the UN has taken a wide range of actions since Russia's invasion began in February. The General Assembly has voted to suspend Russia from the UN Human Rights Council. The world body has also provided assistance to some 2.5 million people in Ukraine, including 218 tons of emergency and medical supplies. Moreover, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres visited Moscow on Tuesday to meet President Vladimir Putin. However, UN agencies are struggling to reach civilians under siege in the east of Ukraine, where humanitarian assistance is sporadic. According to the UN itself, more than 12 million people in Ukraine need humanitarian aid. Meanwhile, the UN Security Council, in which Russia is one of five permanent members with veto power, has failed to pass any resolutions condemning the war.

This has fueled criticism, including from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who has called for Russia to be expelled from the Security Council. He has also said "we have to develop a new tool" that is capable of better maintaining peace in the future. Created in 1945 with the ambition of guaranteeing peace and preventing another world war, the UN confers high influence on the five permanent, veto-wielding members of the Security Council – the US, Russia, China, UK and France. For instance, Moscow has, since 2011, exercised its veto 16 times in votes regarding its ally Syria. And this veto power also guarantees that Moscow can never be removed from the council, since the UN Charter only allows the General Assembly to exclude a member on the recommendation of the Security Council. Yet, while nonalignment may suit many states, it makes the job of ensuring international security harder. Reluctance to take sides in such a clear case of aggression can weaken international norms and undermine global security.

Indeed, one of the few potential silver linings of the coronavirus pandemic is that it has shown yet again how global challenges are best tackled through coordinated international action, often led by the UN. And despite the decay of the post-1945 world order, the remaining dense web of postwar international institutions, with the UN at its heart, continues to have major relevance. Going forward, a fundamental driver of whether the UN will thrive, not just survive, well into the 21st century may rest less with Russia and more with the direction of the relationship between China and the US – the two most powerful members of the UNSC. They seem all set for a growing bilateral rivalry and what some view as a new cold war, which could see international cooperation erode and military tensions increase. However, the China-US relationship may yet contain unexpected potential for a fruitful partnership at the UN and beyond. Such cooperation is more likely if stronger partnerships can be embedded on issues like climate change, as was the case during the Obama presidency, which may then potentially enable more effective ways of resolving hard power disputes, from trade to the military tensions in the South China Sea.

— Courtesy: Arab News

Rising inequality poses a threat to world peace

Ashok Swain

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in its World Social Report 2020, points out that inequality is growing for more than 70 per cent of the world's population, and that is increasing the risks of societal divisions and adversely affecting...

THERE is an ongoing debate over rising income inequality and its adverse impacts on democracies. The inequality between countries is not growing as commonly assumed. This is because the annual economic growth in many developing countries is growing faster than in the industrialised developed world. Some also argue that the rising inequality among people within a country is not universal. The gap between haves and have-nots has somewhat narrowed down in several countries in South America, North Africa and elsewhere. No doubt, the inequality graph is neither straightforward nor universal. However, if we look at the global population and do not consider national boundaries, the world has been witnessing increasing income inequalities for the last three decades. According to a recent report by Credit Suisse, half of the world's wealth is in the hands of only one per cent of the world's population. Among the rich countries, the income and wealth in-

equality in the US is particularly quite extreme. The so-called 'trickle down' approach is not working in the US as the country's bottom 50 per cent is expected to earn only 6 per cent while the top 1 per cent is getting around 40 per cent by the end of this decade. In recent decades, it has been a fact that many parts of the world witnessed a reduction in extreme poverty. In 1990 extreme poverty globally was nearly 36 per cent, and it had come down to below 10 per cent by 2020. Rapid economic growth in a few developing countries, particularly in Asia, improved access to food, health care, education, and housing. However, during the Covid-19 pandemic, several countries faced severe economic crises that pushed millions of families into poverty again.

The globalisation process has translated into huge gains for some and losses for others. The new economy generates new wealth, but it has not benefited the poor and underprivileged sections of society equitably. The debt burden of several developing countries has multiplied, and the gap between the per capita income ratio in developed and developing countries has widened further. The number of poor and unemployed people worldwide is at its highest level ever. The world committed itself to 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in 2015 as a new holistic approach to achieving sustainable development and fastening implementation. The UN had declared the year 2020-2030 as the 'Decade of Action'. While SDG 1 aims at eradicating all forms of poverty, SDG 2 calls for zero hunger by 2030. In 2020, between 720 and 811 million people worldwide had suffered from hunger. This number has increased further during the pandemic. Countries with high inequality are often less successful in reducing poverty and hunger than countries with lesser inequality.

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in its World Social Report 2020, points out that inequality is growing for more than 70 per cent of the world's population, and that is increasing the risks of societal divisions and adversely affecting socioeco-

economic development.

Most of the democratic countries have unfortunately witnessed a rapid increase in economic inequality in recent decades. The average share of disposable income of the top 10 per cent of the population in OCED countries has grown more than nine times higher compared to the bottom 10 per cent population. The Covid-19 pandemic has further expanded the economic inequality in the last two years.

The world's billionaires have acquired more wealth during the pandemic than they had done in the whole of last 14 years. During this time, while the wealth of the 10 richest persons doubled, the income of 99 per cent of the global population declined.

The expanding inequality has contributed significantly to the rapid rise of right-wing populism. The large group, left behind from the growth cycle feels the rules of countries are rigged in favour of the rich and powerful, so it seeks to find a way outside the existing democratic system. Those who have fallen behind often move out of the traditional parties and embrace populist forces. There is enough evidence that economic insecurity leads to larger electoral support for populist forces and develops hostile and strong resentment against the immigrant and minority population. The decline of trust in traditional political elites also leads to increased support for populist parties and leaders. Acute income inequality breaks the traditional political alliances in the country as populists portray it as the loss of democratic legitimacy of the ruling elites. Economic uncertainty and decline in living standards make the relatively deprived population more likely to believe the anti-elite political rhetoric of the populist forces. Growing inequality can even lead to more conflicts in a society. The left-behind group feels relatively deprived for not having what they think they are entitled to, leading to frustration, anger, and grievance. Thus, the rising income and wealth inequality not only erodes democracies but also catalyses more and more group conflicts in a society.

— Courtesy: Gulf News

Briefs

Pakistanis arrested in Saudi Arabia

FROM PAGE 01
Khalid Maqbool Siddiqi, Chaudhry Salik, and four members of PM Shehbaz Sharif's staff are accompanying the prime minister on his visit. But as PM Shehbaz and his delegation arrived at the mosque, the protesters started chanting slogans of "chor, chor (thieves)" when they saw the premier and harassed and raised objectionable slogans against Marriyum Aurangzeb.

Resolution submitted

FROM PAGE 01
disrespect an important national and tribal leader of Balochistan, Sardar Shahzain Bugti in Madina. During his three-day visit to Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif offered the last Friday of Ramadan prayers at the Masjid-i-Nabwi and prayed for the peace and prosperity of the country.

NA speaker to administer oath...

FROM PAGE 01
Subsequently, Hamza's counsel, Khalid Ishaq, read the order out loud and told the court that the president and the Punjab governor were blatantly violating the Constitution. Justice Hassan remarked that no one should have the audacity to flout the court's directives.

Imran Khan reiterates demand for elections

FROM PAGE 01
the nation and the country. The PTI chairman said the prices of all commodities had gone up and apprehended rise in the prices of petroleum products soon. Imran Khan said he would issue a white paper against corruption in next two to three days.

Frankfurt take control against West Ham in Europa semi

They had already stunned Barcelona in the quarter-finals and this was another memorable performance, putting them in pole position to reach the final against RB Leipzig or Rangers

WEB DESK

LONDON: Eintracht Frankfurt seized control of their Europa League semi-final against West Ham as Japan midfielder Daichi Kamada inspired a 2-1 win in the first leg on Thursday. Oliver Glasner's side arrived at the London Stadium as underdogs against a West Ham team enjoying their best season for years.



an final since then, West Ham will have to stage an impressive escape act in Frankfurt to emulate that success. In their first semi-final since the 2014 League Cup, West Ham welcomed back

Rafael Borré was given far too much time and space on the edge of the area and he ruthlessly exploited West Ham's hesitancy. Borré's pin-point cross arched toward the far post, where Knauff got behind the dozing Pablo Fornals and thumped a powerful header past Alphonse Areola from close range.

Salah named FWA Footballer of the Year



LONDON: Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah was voted "Footballer of the Year" in England for a second time, and Chelsea striker Sam Kerr has won the women's award. The Football Writers' Association announced its awards on Friday and reported Salah garnered 48% of the vote, ahead of Manchester City playmaker Kevin De Bruyne and West Ham midfielder Declan Rice.

was open to the full FWA membership for the first time. It was previously decided by an expert panel. Kerr captured 40% of the vote, ahead of Arsenal striker Vivianne Miedema and Manchester City forward Lauren Hemp.

Sport and politics shouldn't mix: Jabeur

MADRID: Tunisian tennis star Ons Jabeur has questioned Wimbledon's decision to ban Russian and Belarusian players by insisting that sports and politics should not mix. Last week, Wimbledon banned Russian and Belarusian players from competing at this year's Championships following the invasion of Ukraine.

Armstrong sets 50m backstroke record

WASHINGTON: Hunter Armstrong set a 50m backstroke world record of 23.71sec to qualify for the 2022 swimming World Championships at the US trials in Greensboro, North Carolina, on Thursday. Armstrong, 21, broke the previous world record of 23.80 set by Russian Kliment Kolesnikov at the European Championships in Budapest on May 18, 2021.



Michael Andrew was second in 50.88 to punch his ticket to the World Championships in Budapest June 18-July 3. Dressel, who won five gold medals at the pandemic-delayed Tokyo Games last year, had already qualified for Budapest in the 100m free and 50m fly. Andrew returned to win the 50m breaststroke in an American record of 26.52 edging Nic Fink for the only World Championships spot by three-hundredths of a second.

Tennis champion sentenced over bankruptcy

LONDON: Former Wimbledon champion Boris Becker has been jailed for two and a half years for hiding £2.5m worth of assets and loans to avoid paying debts. The 54-year-old six-time Grand Slam champion was found guilty of four charges under the Insolvency Act. The case centred on Becker's bankruptcy in June 2017 resulting from an unpaid loan of more than £3m on his luxury estate in Mallorca, Spain.

Azarenka finds no sense in Wimbledon ban

MADRID: Belarus' Victoria Azarenka said the Wimbledon ban on players from Russia and her country makes no sense and the former world number one called on the tennis governing bodies to take action against the decision. The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), which hosts the grass court Grand Slam, took the decision in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the stand was swiftly condemned by the men's and women's tours.

ing after being on a personal call with them, I don't see their reasoning," Azarenka, who sits on the WTA players' council, told reporters in Madrid on Thursday. "It does not make sense and it does not connect to what they are saying." The 32-year-old Azarenka, ranked 17th in the world, won her opening round at the WTA 1000 event in Madrid on Thursday but her fellow Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka's title defence ended with a 6-2 3-6 6-4 defeat to unseeded American Amanda Anisimova.

War-weary Yemenis aspire for peace

"Strong state institutions would pave the way for a permanent ceasefire and lasting peace, and eliminating the humanitarian crisis that killed many Yemenis for years"

DNA
ISTANBUL: The formation of a new presidential council and a UN-brokered truce have raised hopes among Yemeni civilians of establishing peace and security in the war-ravaged country. Earlier this month, Yemen's newly formed presidential council was sworn in to lead the country through a transitional period, sparking hopes of putting an end to the 8-year conflict in the Arab country.

operations were halted. As April 29 marks the World Wish Day, many Yemenis speaking with Anadolu Agency said their main wish is to see peace restored to their country. Abdulhamid El-Ain, a Yemeni doctor based in Saudi Arabia, said establishing peace and security in Yemen is "everyone's wish."

including the capital Sanaa. A Saudi-led coalition, which seeks to reinstate the Yemeni government, has worsened the situation, causing one of the world's worst man-made humanitarian crises. Nearly 80%, or about 30 million people, are in need of humanitarian assistance and protection, and more than 13 million in danger of starvation, according to UN estimates.

Yemeni journalist, without strong state institutions "no wish is coming true." He believes that establishing strong state institutions is a "necessity for a dignified, humane and secure life." "The wishes for lasting peace, acceptable level of freedoms, and a strong economy that enables people to live with honor and dignity are going to become a reality when the state and its institutions are back on track," El-Quhali said.

Courts will open at 3am...

FROM PAGE 01
the confirmation of facts. "Kashif Abbasi had asked why the courts were opened at midnight. A narrative had been built that the courts were opened at night upon someone's directives," Justice Minalah remarked, questioning if there were any political reasons behind it.

Imran Khan visits Chinese Embassy

FROM PAGE 01
The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman said that he is equally grieving over the deceased as their families. The former Prime Minister also stated that the relation of Pakistan and China and their partnership is what our enemies cannot bear.

Scores injured after Israeli police...

FROM PAGE 01
The statement said officers used "riot dispersal means" to contain the unrest. Witnesses and AFP reporters said police fired tear gas and rubber bullets. Police said three people had been arrested, two for throwing stones and one for "inciting the mob."

Jews are allowed to visit the Temple Mount. Muslim leaders have, however, been angered by a recent uptick in such visits/ Some voiced fears that Israel was seeking to divide the compound and create a space where Jews may worship. Lapid told journalists that no such plan exists.

Pakistan condemns Israeli...

FROM PAGE 01
We reaffirm our consistent and unstinted support for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause, which has always been a defining principle of Pakistan's foreign policy. We renew our call for a viable, independent and contiguous Palestinian State, with pre-1967 borders, and Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital being the only just, comprehensive and lasting solution of the Palestinian question, in accordance with the relevant United Nations and OIC resolutions.

Briefs

Azerbaijan, NATO discuss ties

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani Defence Minister Zakir Hasanov and NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Caucasus and Central Asia Javier Colomina have met to discuss prospects for the development of bilateral relations and the regional military and political situation. At a meeting held in Baku on April 29, Hasanov spoke about the positive results achieved in the field of cooperation with NATO. He emphasized the importance of further developing relations between the sides. Furthermore, the delegation was informed on the reforms carried out in the Azerbaijani army in line with President Ilham Aliyev's instructions, as well as the work done in the liberated territories and the current situation on the Azerbaijan-Armenian state border. Expressing gratitude for the warm welcome, Colomina highly appreciated the close cooperation of the Azerbaijani and Turkish armed forces. He underlined this cooperation's significant contribution to Azerbaijan-NATO relations. The two officials also discussed other issues of mutual interest. Earlier, the visiting NATO official met President Ilham Aliyev. Furthermore, Colomina was received by Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov. Colomina arrived in Azerbaijan on April 28.

Hijiyev, Grigoryan will meet in Brussels

BAKU: Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia Armen Grigoryan is scheduled to meet with Foreign Policy Advisor to the President of Azerbaijan Hikmet Hijiyev in Brussels on May 2, ARMENPRESS reports. Grigoryan told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Armenia service, "We will discuss a number of issues related to Armenia-Azerbaijan relations," Armen Grigoryan said. He considered it possible that the Pashinyan-Aliyev meeting could follow that meeting. "If we succeed in getting the answers to all those questions in Brussels, then we can also discuss a meeting at the level of Heads of State in Brussels," said the Security Council Secretary. To the question of the journalist whether the meeting with Hijiyev can be viewed in the context of the preparation of the peace treaty, Grigoryan said. **Agencies**



NEW YORK: Yannick Glemarec, ED of green climate fund called on ambassador Munir Akram, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN. - DNA

Turkey, KSA strive to renew ties for new era, says Erdogan

NEWS DESK

JEDDAH: Turkey and Saudi Arabia are striving to increase all kinds of political, military and economic relations to start a new era, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said early Friday. "We paid a visit to Saudi Arabia upon the invitation of Hadimu'l Haremeyn," or "the Servant of Mecca and Medina," said Erdogan, referring to Saudi King Salman. "As two brotherly countries with historical, cultural and human ties, we are striving to increase all kinds of political, military and economic relations between us and to start a new era," said Erdogan on Twitter. Increased cooperation with Saudi Arabia in health, energy, food security, agricultural technologies, the defense industry and finance is in the common interest, said Erdogan, adding the two countries have serious cooperation potential in renewable and clean energy technologies. Erdogan also said that Turkey attaches great importance to the security and stability of the Gulf region. "We express on every occasion that we attach as much importance to the stability and security of our brothers in the Gulf region as our own," he said. "We underline that we are against all forms of terrorism and that we attach importance to cooperation with the countries in our region against terrorism," he added. "I believe we will take our relations to a level beyond what they were previously," said Erdogan, adding his visit during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan "will open the doors of a new era with our friend and brother Saudi Arabia." King Salman received President Erdogan Thursday evening with an official ceremony in the city of Jiddah. The two leaders held a closed-door meeting at Al-



Salam Royal Palace. Erdogan also met with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS). Earlier, the president arrived in Saudi Arabia for a two-day working visit. Erdogan and Saudi Arabia's crown prince met to develop relations during the first visit since the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi drove a wedge between the two regional powers. The last time Erdogan visited Saudi Arabia was in 2017, when he tried to mediate a dispute pitting the kingdom and other Gulf countries against Qatar. Saudi state

news agency SPA reported that the pair "reviewed the Saudi-Turkish relations and ways to develop them in all fields." Erdogan then visited the Muslim holy city of Mecca to perform an umrah pilgrimage. Prior to flying from Istanbul to Saudi's second city Jiddah, where some roads were lined with Turkish and Saudi flags, Erdogan said he hoped "to launch a new era" in bilateral ties. "My visit (to Saudi Arabia) is the manifestation of our common will to start a new era of cooperation as two brotherly countries,"

Erdogan told reporters at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport. "It is in our common interest to increase our cooperation with Saudi Arabia in fields such as health, energy, food security, agricultural technologies, defense industry, and finance," he said. Erdogan also said that Turkey strives to ensure regional peace and resolve problems via dialogue and diplomacy. "I believe we will boost our ties in every field through our joint efforts," he said, stressing "the potential, especially in renewable and clean energy technologies."

Pak-China working together for agricultural mechanization

DNA

BEIJING: A Pakistani expert on agriculture stressed for collaboration with Chinese researchers on the development of modern agricultural machine to enhance yields and profits to farmers in Pakistan. "Slow adoption of mechanization technology has been a key reason for low yields and inefficiencies in agriculture in Pakistan, resulting in lower profit for farmers" said Dr. Muhammad Waqar Akram, a lecturer in the Department of Farm Machinery and Power, University of Agriculture Faisalabad. He is currently attending Modern Agriculture Workshop of China-Pakistan Regional Innovation Institute for Modern Agriculture organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China and undertaken by Jiangsu University. The five-month workshop, starting from the end of March, provides inclusive training on the usage and maintenance of modern agricultural machinery, field management, water saving irrigation, food processing, China Economic Net (CEN) reported. According to Dr. Waqar Akram, there are no updated existing proper studies or surveys conducted on the present status of farm mechanization in Pakistan. However, according to rough studies,

the utilization of Agricultural machinery and adoption rate is very low. "In Pakistan, farm mechanization has been limited to few basic tools for land preparation and outdated models of combined harvesters when harvesting grain crops," he said. Infusion of the right mechanization technology will be crucial for the productivity increase and growth of agriculture in Pakistan. In his opinion, the machines that should be popular and common in Pakistan are related to rice, cotton, maize and sugarcane crop as these are the major crops of Pakistan, but usage of machinery for these crops is very less or zero, for example, planters for cotton, maize and sugarcane crops, transplanter for rice crop, cotton picker for cotton crop, maize harvesters, sugarcane harvesters, drone spraying technology, etc. The planters and harvesters/diggers for vegetables and other crops also has huge potential to be applied in a wide scope. He also noted that due to the seasonal nature of the agriculture, the farm machinery remains idle for much of the time, incurring unnecessary high costs unless proper alternate use of such machinery in the off-season is made. To cope with this situation, multi-crop planters and multi-crop harvesters have huge potential to be applied in a wide scope. Lack of awareness, low standard man-

ufacturing of agricultural machinery, lack of repair and replacement facilities especially in the remote rural areas, absence of standardization of agricultural machinery, and weak knowledge transmission are hindering Pakistani farmers to reap the benefits of modern agricultural machines. Small sized farms and scattered land holdings prevail in Pakistan. "For Pakistan, I think small scale machinery is one of the best options in terms of existing average farm size and affordability of farmers. Another possible option could be development of machinery pools for availability of expensive machines at rent in towns and villages," he recommended. The usage of modern machinery can bring a variety of benefits to farmers: enhanced efficiency of operations, precise application of different inputs, reduction in the cost of production, enhancement in the production quantity and quality of produce, timeliness of operations, increased cropping intensity due to timely operations, increase in the area under cultivation through development of culturable wasteland, reduced dependence on labor, reduced labor drudgery, etc. "The China-Pakistan Regional Innovation Institute for Modern Agriculture inaugurated on Mar. 28 will provide a facilitating platform," he added.

EU calls for restraint after explosions in Moldova

AGENCIES

BRUSSELS: EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell called on Friday for all actors to avoid destabilization in the aftermath of explosions in Moldova's breakaway region Transnistria. "The European Union calls on the responsible actors to avoid the destabilization of the situation," Borrell said in an official statement, calling the latest incidents in Transnistria "detrimental to the security and stability of the Republic of Moldova." He welcomed the "restrained reactions" of the Moldovan government and reiterated the bloc's support for the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty. He also reassured of the EU's continued aid for

Moldova to manage the arrival of Ukrainian refugees and stepped up efforts for mid-term economic support amid Russia's war on Ukraine. On Tuesday, several explosions damaged a Soviet-era radio tower in Transnistria, leading to speculations that Russia would expand its military operations to Moldova. After Moldova declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Transnistria declared its independence unilaterally. A brief war in 1992 between Moldova and Russia-backed separatists ended with a cease-fire. With Moscow's support, the region continues to insist on its independence from Moldova, running a separate administration, parliament, army, police, and postal system from Chisinau.



EU border agency head resigns

BRUSSELS: The EU border agency chief has stepped down after a probe into the agency's involvement in illegal pushbacks, multiple news outlets reported on Friday. The resignation of Fabrice Leggeri, Frontex executive director, comes after another joint investigation of prestigious European media outlets revealed that despite public denial, the EU border agency was involved in illegal pushbacks of asylum seekers in the Aegean Sea, according to their own database. Politico, Der Spiegel and Lighthouse Reports reported that Leggeri has tendered his resignation and communicated his decision to the board of management of the agency. The EU's anti-fraud watchdog Olaf is expected to publish its report on the misgivings around the management of Frontex. Another Olaf report - which has not been shared with the wider public due to the sensitivity of the information, according to an EU official speaking on condition of anonymity to Anadolu Agency - has also confirmed Frontex's involvement in pushbacks. According to the source, Leggeri and other top officials were also aware of the illegal activity but tried to cover it up. - APP

Russian, Kazakh presidents discuss bilateral ties

MOSCOW: The Russian and Kazakh presidents discussed the possibilities of expansion of economic cooperation and the development of bilateral ties in a phone call on Friday, a Kremlin statement said. According to the statement, Vladimir Putin and Kassym-Jomart Tokayev also spoke about the cooperation within the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), a military bloc, comprising six post-Soviet states - Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan. The CSTO played a crucial role in restoring order in Kazakhstan in January this year, when protests against the rise of fuel prices broke out in the Central Asian country. - Agencies

UK to send 8,000 more troops to E. Europe

LONDON: The UK armed forces will send around 8,000 more troops to Eastern Europe in a bid to deter Russian 'aggression', the Defense Ministry said on Friday. The British troops will take part in broad military exercises spanning from north to south, making it one of the largest deployments to take place since the end of the Cold War. "The security of Europe has never been more important. These exercises will see our troops join forces with allies and partners across NATO and the Joint Expeditionary Force in a show of solidarity and strength in one of the largest shared deployments since the Cold War," Defense Secretary Ben Wallace said. "Operating across Europe, the British Army will stand alongside partners, combining our capabilities and shared values, promoting peace and security," Wallace added. - APP

Thousands pray at Al-Aqsa

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: More than 160,000 Muslim worshippers performed today the fourth and last Friday prayer of the holy month of Ramadan at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied Jerusalem, despite Israel's restrictions on the entry of worshippers to the holy site. About 160,000 faithful, most of them Palestinians from Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Arab towns inside Israel, prayed at al-Aqsa Mosque today, the third holiest site in Islam, said the Jordan-run Islamic Waqf authority overseeing the compound. - APP

3,000 asylum seekers died or went missing

NEW YORK: More than 3,000 people died or went missing while trying to cross into European countries in 2021, an official from the UN refugee agency (UNHCR) said on Friday. The people died or went missing while attempting to cross the Central and Western Mediterranean and Atlantic to Europe, UNHCR spokesperson Shabia Mantoo said at a press briefing in Geneva. Mantoo was citing a new UNHCR report which also called for urgent help "to prevent deaths and protect refugees and asylum seekers who are embarking on dangerous journeys by land and sea." The number of deaths reported in 2020 were 1,544 for the two routes. - Agencies

China HPP providing uninterrupted power in Ramadan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: While Pakistan is facing electricity shortage, China Power Hub Coal Power Project, Hub Balochistan, is one of the major power projects under CPEC. China Power Hub Generation Company (Private) Limited sponsored and executed the project with an amount of US\$ 1921.2 million. The project was completed in August 2019 while it started commercial operation in October 2019. Besides power generation, the project also creates 1,722 jobs (including 749 for locals) while over 4,000 people were benefited during the construction of the project. Alibaba taking initiatives to tap Pakistan's e-commerce potential Alibaba in the recent past has taken multiple initiatives to tap Pakistan's unexplored e-commerce potential. The Chinese e-commerce firm has now partnered with Enablers Global

Service to facilitate its sellers within Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Friday. Enablers, the largest e-commerce network in Pakistan has signed the contract as global service partnership with Alibaba, a Chinese tech giant specialising in e-commerce, retail, internet, and technology. This has been considered a huge development for Pakistan where another door will open for Pakistan's e-commerce industry. After this collaboration, Enablers will facilitate sellers of Alibaba within Pakistan to help boost their sales. Live commerce in China has been super successful because of the infrastructure built by e-commerce enablers like Alibaba. Previously Alibaba enabled access for the Pakistani businesses, allowing them to list their stores, to sell their products to B2B buyers around the globe. Pakistan is the 5th most populous country in the world, with the percentage of youth standing at 64%.

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Briefs

Australian High Commissioner wishes Pakistanis Eid Mubarak

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Australia's Acting High Commissioner to Pakistan Joanne Frederiksen sends his warmest wishes to Muslims in Pakistan, Australia and around the world on Eid ul Fitr. In her message she said:

"I send my warmest good wishes to Muslims here in Pakistan, back home in Australia, and right around the world, who are celebrating the festival of Eid al-Fitr. Eid is a joyous occasion, to be celebrated with family and friends – a truly special time. In Australia, we take pride in being an open and diverse multi-ethnic and multi-faith democracy. With every Eid celebration we are given an opportunity to reflect on the invaluable contribution Australian Muslims make to the Australian community. Australia and Pakistan's people-to-people links continue to deepen and grow. These links draw on over 70 years of friendship between our two countries, underpinned by a shared Commonwealth heritage, engagement on peace and security, steady trade ties, cooperation on education and our common love of cricket. So on behalf of Australia – let me wish you a happy a peaceful celebration. Eid Mubarak."

Pakistan condemns prohibition of Ramzan prayers in Srinagar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Friday strongly condemned the prohibition of "Shab-e-Qadr" and "Jumal ul Vida" congregations at Jama Masjid in Srinagar. The Foreign Office spokesperson in a statement said the Indian occupation forces had intensified their repression against innocent Kashmiris during the Holy Month of Ramadan. The Indian occupation forces had prohibited the congregations of "Shab-e-Qadr" and "Jumal ul Vida" at Jama Masjid in Srinagar. He said, "Pakistan condemns in the strongest possible terms these curbs on Kashmiri Muslims to practice their religion and restraining them from congregating on special religious occasions in this holy month of peace and mercy.

"These curbs are the latest in a series of repressive measures taken by Indian occupation forces in IIOJK (Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir) that have hurt the religious sentiments of Muslims, from desecration of the Holy Quran and burning down of mosques and shrines in IIOJK to restrictions on religious congregations and prayers. Indian forces have also been engaged in unrelenting and willful attacks, harassment and intrusive surveillance of Muslim worshippers. "The conduct of Indian forces defies all norms of decency and human dignity. Imposition of restrictions on religious freedoms through illegal, arbitrary, and unjustified measures is yet another brazen assault by Indian occupation forces on the human rights of the Kashmiri Muslims. – APP

Former US Marine killed fighting in Ukraine

WASHINGTON: A former United States Marine has been killed fighting alongside Ukrainian forces in the war with Russia, his relatives told news outlets, in the first known death of a US citizen fighting Russian forces in Ukraine. Rebecca Cabrera told CNN her son, Willy Joseph Cancel, 22, was killed on Monday while working for a private military contracting company that sent him to Ukraine.

Cabrera said her son had been working as a corrections officer in Tennessee and had signed up to work with the private military contractor shortly before the fighting began in Ukraine in late February. She told CNN he agreed to go to Ukraine. "He wanted to go over because he believed in what Ukraine was fighting for, and he wanted to be a part of it to contain it there so it didn't come here, and that maybe our American soldiers wouldn't have to be involved in it," she said. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio hosted iftar dinner at his residence for Pakistani friends from think-tanks and media. Ambassadors of Thailand and Germany also attended the iftar dinner. – DNA

Afghanistan: At least 50 killed in Mosque blast

Dozens of Afghan civilians have been killed in recent weeks in blasts, some of which have been claimed by the ISIL (ISIS) group

NEWS DESK

Pakistan condemns terrorist attacks in Afghanistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns terrorist attacks in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan on 28 April 2022 causing loss of precious Afghan lives and injuring many others. The Government and people of Pakistan extend their sympathies, support and solidarity to the people of Afghanistan and particularly with the bereaved families. We

were among the dead. "I myself survived, but lost my beloved ones," he said. Resident Mohammad Sabir said he had seen people being loaded into ambulances. "The blast was very loud, I thought my eardrums were cracked," he said.

believe these heinous acts of terrorism against innocent Afghans are aimed at weakening the resolve of the Afghan nation in pursuit of peace, stability and progress. The targeting of Hazara and Shia community in Afghanistan through these acts of terrorism is also a matter of serious concern. We urge the international community to extend all possible support and assistance to Afghanistan in combating terrorism and overcoming these challenges.

Emergency Hospital in downtown Kabul said it was treating 21 patients wounded in the blast and two patients were dead on arrival. A nurse at another hospital, who declined to be identified, said it had received several wounded in critical con-

dition. A health source said hospitals had so far received at least 30 bodies in total. Scores of Afghan civilians have been killed in recent weeks in blasts, some of which have been claimed by Daesh. The latest attack came on the last Friday in the month of Ramadan in which most Muslims fast, and before the religious holiday of Eid next week. The Taliban say they have secured the country since taking power in August and largely eliminated Daesh's local offshoot, but international officials and analysts say the risk of a resurgence in militancy remains. Many of the attacks have targeted the Shia, however Sunni mosques have also been attacked. Bombs exploded aboard two passenger vans carrying Shias in the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif on Thursday, killing at least nine people. Last Friday, a blast tore through a Sunni mosque during Friday prayers in the city of Kunduz, killing 33.

Pakistan will seek Saudi action over protest at Masjid-e-Nabvi: Sana

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to request the authorities in Saudi Arabia to initiate action against those people who raised slogans at Masjid-e-Nabwi and misbehaved with Pakistani ministers during Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit. Addressing a joint news conference with Adviser to PM on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira in Islamabad on Friday, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that the government will request Saudi Arabia to take action against those who raised slogans at Masjid-e-Nabwi.

Rana Sanaullah said the interior ministry has sought advice from the law ministry about taking legal action against the culprits. "My ministry is going to make a humble request to the Saudi government to take appropriate action in this regard so that such behaviour is controlled. We will also apprise them that the whole nation passed through a stressful period when they came to know what happened at the holy mosque." He added that the government will also request the kingdom to identify the culprits through CCTV footage and share details with the government so that action is taken



against them. "They should be sent back, they should not be allowed to stay there [Madinah], they don't deserve to be at holy places as it could spark religious disharmony here," said Rana Sanaullah. Rana Sanaullah and Qamar Zaman Kaira vehemently condemned the catcalls and jeers hurled at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his coterie at Masjid-e-Nabwi apparently by the supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). The interior minister said the incident that took place in Madinah the previous day was unfortunate. "The incident is a disgrace to the entire nation. It was pre-planned and organised from Pakistan," he maintained. "It had been stated in a press conference a day earlier that people in Makkah and Madinah will treat the government delegation badly," Rana Sana pointed out. "Such incidents are regrettable. Insulting people will make politics difficult. You [PTI] have tested our patience for four years," he warned. Rana Sana said that he, as a president of PML-N Punjab, was under intense pressure as the party workers were encouraging him for giving the PTI leaders the taste of their own medicine.

Pakistan reports second polio case of year 2022

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination on Friday confirmed that a two-year-old girl was paralyzed by the wild polio-virus in the second case in Pakistan this year. According to the spokesman of the Ministry of National Health Services, the child had an onset of paralysis on April 14. The new type-1 wild polio-virus (WPV1) was confirmed from North Waziristan on 29 April 2022 by the Pakistan National Polio Laboratory at the National Institute of Health in Islamabad, he added. He said that, on 22 April, a 15-month boy had been confirmed with wild polio with an onset of paralysis on April 9. Both children are from North Waziristan, Southern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and belong to adjacent Union Councils of Mir Ali. The WPV1 cases are genetically linked and belong to the same virus cluster, further validating the Pakistan Polio Programme's concerns for Southern KP, where continuous virus circulation has been detected. "It is heartbreaking to learn that a two-year-old girl will be paralyzed for the rest of her life by a virus that has been eliminated in most parts of the world," Minister for

Health Qadir Patel said. "This is tragic for her family, for the community and all of us in Pakistan, but mostly for this child, who will live with an incurable disease that was entirely preventable." "I am directly in contact with the Emergency Operations Centre for polio. They remain highly vigilant and are urgently working to ensure that the virus does not spread outside this particular area. I am personally looking into the case and detailed investigations pertaining to it," the health minister said, adding, "After Eid, I will be visiting the province myself to monitor the situation on the ground." The polio programme's health workers on the frontline continue to reach children in North Waziristan despite challenging circumstances in hard-to-reach areas. Southern KP had been identified by the polio programme as the area most at risk after wild polio-virus was detected in environmental samples in the last quarter of 2021. Following this, an emergency action plan was initiated in January this year that is allowing the programme to reach more children than ever before and protect them from the paralytic virus before it affects more lives. – APP

Ukraine says Russia taking 'colossal losses'

MONITORING DESK

KYIV: Ukraine acknowledged on Friday it was taking heavy losses in Russia's assault in the east, but said Russia's losses were even worse, as U.S. President Joe Biden called on Congress to send as much as \$33 billion to help Kyiv withstand the attack. The body of a journalist from U.S.-backed broadcaster Radio Liberty was found in rubble in the Ukrainian capital, killed in a Russian missile attack during a visit by the U.N. secretary-general. President Volodymyr Zelensky praised Biden's offer of help, which amounts to nearly 10 times the aid Washington has sent so far since the war began on Feb. 24. Having failed in an assault on Kyiv in the north of Ukraine last month, Russia is now trying to fully capture two eastern provinces known as Donbas. Ukraine has acknowledged losing control of some towns and villages there since the assault began last week, but

says Moscow's gains have come at a massive cost to a Russian force already worn down from its earlier defeat near the capital. "We have serious losses but the Russians' losses are much much bigger...They have colossal losses," presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovych said, without elaborating. Western officials said Russia had been suffering fewer casualties after narrowing the scale of its invasion but numbers were still "quite high". Zelensky's office said Russia was pounding the entire front line in the eastern Donetsk region with rockets, artillery, mortar bombs and aircraft. The Ukrainian general staff said Russia was shelling positions along the line of contact to prevent the Ukrainians from regrouping. A U.S. official said the Russian offensive in Donbas appeared to be behind schedule. By pledging tens of billions of dollars in aid for Ukraine, Biden has dramatically increased U.S. involvement in the conflict. The United States and its allies are now sending heavy weapons including artillery, with what Washington says is an aim not just to repel Russia's attack but to

weaken its armed forces so it cannot menace its neighbours again. "We need this bill to support Ukraine in its fight for freedom," Biden said. "The cost of this fight - it's not cheap - but caving to aggression is going to be more costly." Zelensky tweeted: "Thank you @POTUS and the American people for their leadership in supporting Ukraine in our fight against Russian aggression. We defend common values - democracy and freedom. We appreciate the help. Today it is needed more than ever!" While the proposed U.S. aid amounts to more than 20 percent of Ukraine's 2020 GDP, the World Bank estimates the war will cut more than 45 percent off Ukrainian GDP this year and hit growth elsewhere around the world. Some of Russia's neighbours say they fear Moscow could target them next. Russia has said the arrival of Western arms into Ukraine means it is now fighting a "proxy war" against NATO. President Vladimir Putin threatened unspecified retaliation this week, while his foreign minister warned of a threat of nuclear war.

Met Office predicts rain during eid holidays

DNA

KARACHI: After the hot and dry weather, several parts of country are likely to receive rainfall during the Eid-ul-Fitr holidays, Met official said Friday. The Met Office in a statement said the westerly wave is likely to enter western part of the country from May 1 and likely to persist till May 5 (Thursday). Under the influence of this weather system, rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Chaghi, Noshki, Quetta, Chaman, Pishin, Qila Abdullah, Loralai, Mastung, Zhob, Ziarat, Kalat, Sibbi, Naseerabad, Barkhan, Larkana, Jacobabad, Sukkur, Rajanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Layyah, Bhakkar, Multan, Khanawal, Sahiwal, Okara, Pakpattan, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, and Rahimyar Khan from 01st May to 03rd May. -storm is also expected in Karachi, Hyderabad, Shaheed Benazirabad, Mirpurkhas, Thatta and Badin during May 1 and 2nd. Dust-thunderstorm/ light rain is expected in D. I Khan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Waziristan, Murree, Galiyat, Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Mianwali, Khushab, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Toba Tek Sing, Jhang, Sheikhupura, Lahore, Hafizabad, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Narawal and Gujrat from 02nd to 04th May.

Pakistan, China welcome UNSC's statement

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan and China Friday welcomed the UN Security Council's statement calling for bringing those responsible for the deadly terrorist attack in the Karachi University to justice. "We expect international community's full cooperation in identifying the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of this terrorist act, and to hold them accountable," Ambassador Munir Akram said, while reacting to the 15-member Council's statement on Tuesday's attack. In his remarks, Chinese Ambassador Zhang Jun said the Security Council's statement underlined the need to bring those responsible for the heinous attack to justice. "The message is clear: Acts of terror are unjustifiable, criminal, and must be punished," the Chinese envoy added. The attack, which was claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army, resulted in the deaths of three Chinese nationals and one Pakistani as well as several injured. – APP

China urges all countries to combat terrorism

BEIJING: China on Friday said that terrorism was enemy of mankind and urged all the countries to strengthen coordination to combat this menace for global peace and stability. Terrorism is a common enemy of mankind and fighting terrorism is the shared responsibility of the international community, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Zhao Lijian said at a regular news briefing. Three Chinese teachers and a Pakistani national were killed at the University of Karachi on Tuesday when their van came under terrorist attack. In a statement on Thursday, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) condemned in the strongest terms the heinous and cowardly terrorist attack on one of the Confucius Institutes at the University of Karachi. – Agencies

Taliban Frees 35 Prisoners to Honor Eid

WEB DESK

KABUL: Local officials of the southeastern Helmand province have exempted dozens of prisoners and released them as the Muslims' biggest festival-Eid-ul-Fitr arrives, Bakhtar News Agency reported. The 35 prisoners who were accused of various crimes were taken out of jail on Thursday, April 28, 2022. Not only the Taliban but every Afghan government would release prisoners to honor Eid which is typically a period of exemption. News Agency has quoted the provincial judge Mawlawi Sidiqullah Mudasar saying the jailers were freed from two prisons in the districts of Babaji and Musa Qala. One of the two biggest Muslim religious festivals-Eid-ul-Fitr that marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan is purportedly supposed to start in May the first of this year.