



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, April 26, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

UNSC must stop Israeli violence against Palestinians

Detailed News On Page-07

Talks with Saudi Arabia 'positive'

Detailed News On Page-08



Hassan Ali gets 9 wickets in County

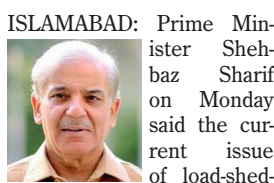
Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Load-shedding result of PTI policies: PM

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said the current issue of load-shedding in the country was due to the policies of the government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf which failed to address the problem of electricity generation in its tenure. "The PTI government neither purchased fuel in time nor repaired power plants. Hence the current load-shedding," he said in a tweet. Shehbaz Sharif recalled that previously, Pakistan Muslim League leader Mian Nawaz Sharif during his government had ended the worst load-shedding in five years.

Bilawal praises CEC

NAZIR SIYAL



KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has praised the Chief Election Commissioner for withstanding the pressure of the former government and improving the standing of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). In a press statement issued from Media Cell Bilawal House, PPP Chairman said that we support all institutions in their effort to transition from controversial to constitutional rolls. "Imran Khan's politics now is to target all institutions with his 'Mujay Ku Nahi Bachaya' campaign. His politics is now based on lies and propaganda," he added.

Pakistan to strengthen ties with China

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar Monday said Pakistan was determined to further strengthen the all weather strategic cooperative partnership with China. She was talking to Charge d' Affairs of China Pang Chunxue here. The Minister of State appreciated the sincere support of China for the progress and development of Pakistan.

Afghans with ID allowed to go home

The government had banned crossing over/exit of Afghans through Tazkira early in previous March

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Hundreds of Afghans who were stranded at border town of Landi Kotal Khyber and its surrounding areas, Monday thronged the Pak Afghan border at Torkham when the authorities announced one-sided relaxation in a ban imposed on travelling of pedestrians through Tazkira (Afghanistan national Identity card). Special Envoy for Afghanistan through a message stated, "Tazkira holders will be allowed to leave for Afghanistan via Torkham border till 29th April 2022. All those who wish to return to their homes, need to exit during this window. Normally, only patients are allowed crossings without visa's on Torkham." Civil administration officials at Torkham confirmed opening of the border in the light of Special Envoy's message and federal interior ministry directives. The government had banned crossing over/exit of Afghans through Tazkira early in previous March. Earlier, since 2015 last, Pakistan has introduced one-sided travelling restrictions for

1,500 destitute Afghans receive Chinese aid

DNA

BEIJING: The Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation Affairs distributed China-donated humanitarian assistance to 1,500 destitute people here on Saturday. "Today we distributed the humanitarian assistance to 1,500 needy people and would continue to help needy families next week," Minister for Refugees and Repatriation Affairs Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani told reporters. In the meantime, Spokesman for the ministry Abdul Mutalib Haqqani told Xinhua that each needy person received a 50 kg sack of rice donated by China in humanitarian aid to the people of Afghanistan.

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Ahsan Iqbal clarifies remarks about Cuba

Says we have deep respect for the people of Cuba & our deep affectionate relations with Cuba

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal has clarified his remarks about Cuba saying his remarks were only in the context of foreign policy. In his Tweet Ahsan Iqbal while replying to Cuban ambassador's Tweet said, "Excellency! We have deep respect for the people of Cuba & our deep affectionate relations with Cuba. We can't forget how Cuban doctors played heroic role in after math of 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. My re-



marks were only in the context of foreign policy'. Earlier the Cuban Ambassador in

Continued on Page 06

IHC suspends order in PTI funding case

The PTI has sought a judicial order for the ECP to conclude similar cases against PML-N, PPP and other political parties

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday suspended the order to conclude the PTI foreign funding case within 30 days. A single bench had directed the Election Commission of Pakistan to wrap up the case in a month, over applications filed by the PTI asking for Akbar S Babar's separation from the case, the dismissal of the case, and keeping the PTI documents secret. Today's directive

was issued by IHC's division bench, comprising IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Babar Sattar, in response to PTI's intra-court appeal challenging a single bench's order. The bench combined the PTI petition against ECP's alleged bias with the intra-court appeal and issued notices to the parties, seeking replies on May 17. The PTI has sought a judicial order for the ECP to conclude similar cases against PML-N, PPP and other

Continued on Page 06



TORKHAM: Stranded citizens await crossing border into Afghanistan after authorities announced relaxing of rules. - DNA

Ogra dismisses reports of fuel shortage

'Ogra monitoring the situation with the help of law enforcement agencies'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (Ogra) on Monday dismissed reports of fuel shortage in parts of the country, maintaining that "adequate" supplies of petrol and diesel were available to cater to domestic needs. An Ogra spokesperson said that speculation was rife about the shortage of diesel in a few pockets of Punjab, adding that "Ogra is monitoring the situation with the help of law enforcement agencies." He warned that anyone found involved in hoarding or stocking fuel with an intent to create a shortage would be dealt with in accordance to the law. However, the All Pakistan Petrol Pumps Dealers Association had a different version to offer. Nauman Ali Butt, the secretary general of the association, said none of the oil companies except Pakistan State Oil (PSO) were supplying fuel to the dealers. Butt claimed that all private companies had suspended their operations and that PSO was the only supplier currently operation in the province. He urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to look into the matter and ensure the provision of uninterrupted fuel supply to dealers in order ensure continued supply of petroleum products to the public.

PM to visit KSA on commercial flight: Marriyum

Says the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders should not mislead the masses through false and baseless propaganda



SHUJAAT HAMZA/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday stated that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was not going to Saudi Arabia on a chartered plane. The minister, in a statement in response to a tweet of former information minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, said the

Continued on Page 06

Ordinary passport issued to Nawaz

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Interior Ministry on Monday issued a new passport to Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Quaid and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. According to the Immigration and Passport Department of Interior Ministry, an ordinary passport with validity for 10 years was issued to Nawaz Sharif. He had applied for the new one after expiry of his old passport. It was made in the "urgent" category. Nawaz Sharif was allowed to proceed to London for four weeks on November 19, 2019 as a "one-time permission" by the Lahore High Court. The newly sworn-in Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah said

Continued on Page 06

Inside...

Health dept should ensure 100% coverage of dengue hotspots: DC - Page 02

ICCI urges government not to withdraw amnesty scheme - Page 03

Indian minorities must unite against repression - Page 04

The spirit of electoral reforms - Page 05

Pakistan envoy vows to further strengthen ties with Sweden - Page 06

UNSC must stop Israeli violence against Palestinians: Indonesia - Page 07

Modi's visit a ploy to project fake normalcy - Page 08

Russia warns US against sending arms to Ukraine

War in Ukraine: Latest developments

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Russia told the United States to stop sending more arms to Ukraine, warning that large Western deliveries of weapons were inflaming the conflict and would lead to more losses, Moscow's ambassador to Washington said. Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine has killed thousands of people, displaced millions more and raised fears of a wider confrontation between Russia and the United States - by far the world's two biggest nuclear powers. The United States has ruled out sending its own or NATO forces to Ukraine but Washington and its European allies have supplied weapons to Kyiv such as drones, Howitzer heavy artillery, anti-aircraft Stinger and anti-tank Javelin missiles.

KYIV: Here are the latest developments in the war in Ukraine: At least five people are killed and 18 injured in Russian rocket strikes on railway stations in the central Ukraine region of Vinnytsia, the Ukrainian prosecutor general's office says. The head of Ukraine railways says five stations in the centre and west of the country came under fire in the space of an hour. At least 57 people were killed earlier this month in Russian strikes on a train station used for evacuations in the eastern city of Kramatorsk. US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin says he hopes that the war in Ukraine will hobble the Rus-

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06



www.lala.com.pk | www.laprints.pk

laprintsbylala laprintsbylala lalalprints lalalocal

Health dept should ensure 100% coverage of dengue hotspots

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: Deputy Commissioner Dr Khurram Shehzad said, "Dengue is a deadly virus. The health department should ensure 100% coverage of dengue hotspots and allocate separate wards for dengue in all hospitals." He expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the District Emergency Response Committee. CEO Health Dr. Naem Akhtar Janjua, DHO Dr. Zakir Ali Rana, Deputy Di-

rector Agriculture Dr. Irfanullah Warraich, and Deputy Director Livestock Dr. Rizwanullah were also present on the occasion. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Khurram Shehzad said, "All allied departments should carry out activities regarding dengue surveillance effectively. The Department of Agriculture and Livestock should tighten third party evaluations. Strict action should be taken against those who engage in bogus activities." He further said that all government hospitals

should regularly report suspected cases of dengue. Similarly, general practitioners should also be required to report dengue symptoms in the patients, and chemical treatment of ponds in the district should be carried out, he added. The Deputy Commissioner appealed to the citizens to cooperate fully with the health teams who come to their houses for dengue surveillance, not to allow standing water in the houses and to see a doctor immediately if any symptoms of dengue appear.



PESHAWAR: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov meeting with the acting Governor of KP Mushtaq Ghani, on Monday. – DNA

CM KP discusses safe city project

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: As an important step to make the provincial capital a safe city, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to execute the Peshawar Safe City project in different phases.

In the first phase, implementation of this project will start as a pilot project from Hayatabad which will be extended to other areas of the city in the next phases. The decision was made in a high-level meeting held here on Monday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair. Besides provincial cabinet members Taimur Saleem Jhagra and Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Chief Secretary Dr. Shehzad Bangash, Inspector General of Police Muazzam Jah Ansari, Principal Secretary to CM Anjad Ali Khan, Secretary finance Ikramullah Khan, Secretary home Khushal Khan, Capital City Police Officer Muhammad Ijaz and other concerned officials attended the meeting. The meeting decided that plan for the implementation of the pilot project would be finalized within a week while consultancy for the implementation of the pilot project would be completed within a month whereas the pilot project would be completed by the end of this year.

It was also decided that the project would be implemented through open tendering. Briefing the meeting about various aspects of the pilot project, it was informed that a preliminary survey of Hayatabad has been completed to this end. As per the survey report, about 500 CCTV cameras would be installed at 96 different points of Hayatabad while 56 km long fiber optic cable would be laid to integrate the CCTV cameras.

It was also told that after the successful completion of the pilot project in Hayatabad, it would be extended to other areas of the city. On the occasion, the Chief Minister directed the quarters concerned to advertise consultancy for the pilot project as soon as possible and said that execution of safe city project was imperative so as to make Peshawar a safe city.

He added that the provincial government would provide all the required resources for this purpose. The chair also directed the concerned quarters to fulfill their respective shares of responsibilities well in time in order to ensure the implementation of the project without further delay. He also directed the concerned authorities to strictly adhere to the prevailing rules and regulations and ensure transparency in all respects while executing the project.

PTI govt abolished to save country from bankruptcy

FAISALABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sanaulah Khan said that PTI government was abolished under a constitutional manner to save the country from bankruptcy. He was addressing a rousing reception arranged here on Sunday night in his honor on taking portfolio of Interior Minister. He said that PTI government had enforced unemployment and price hike in the country in addition to creating political instability which ruined the economic progress. "We tried our best to keep democratic system running in greater national interest so that PTI government could fulfill its promises made with the people. In this connection, Shehbaz Sharif had offered Misaq-e-Maeshat (Charter of Economy) to Imran Khan but he did not pay any heed to it. Therefore, it became necessary to get rid of 'Imrani government' as early as possible; otherwise, these ineligible rulers could make Pakistan bankrupt", he added.

He said that PTI government instead of serving the masses adopted victimization of their political opponents. They implicated their political rivals in false and fabricated corruption cases due to which they failed to prove a single case before any court of law. Rana Sana Ullah said that he was also victimized and involved in a bogus case of narcotics but no allegation was proved against him so far. He said that Pindi sheikh had earlier claimed that "no confidence" would not succeed against Imran Khan but now he was trumpeting that PTI supporters were hired. "No PTI worker or supporter was hired rather they themselves left Imran Khan when they realized that Khan would ruin the country completely", he claimed. He said that PML-N government would not adopt policies of victimization rather it would take remedial measures to provide maximum relief to the masses by overcoming the unprecedented price hike. – APP

Experts term energy wheeling a key development

ISLAMABAD: Energy wheeling and industry academia linkage should be prioritized for improving business regulatory environment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The experts from Public, private sectors, and academia, said this during the hybrid public private dialogue on "Better Business Regulatory Environment in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and National Network of Economic Think Tanks (NNETT), in collaboration with the University of Swabi. Mr Javed Khattak, CEO, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC), on the occasion highlighted several initiatives of the government for providing relief to the businesses. Such measure includes keeping the units operational during COVID-19, financial institutions' reforms, regulatory easing, and manufacturing base enhancement, he added. Ms Shamama Arbab, Chairperson, Pakistan Stone Development Company (PAS-DEC) underpinned the need for innovation through active and effective industry-academia linkage. Mr Waheed Khan from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Environmental Protection Agency, emphasized on the need for mechanized mining of marble industry, and incentivized waste management. – APP

LHC issues notice to NAB on Maryam Nawaz plea for passport

LAHORE: A Lahore High Court (LHC) division bench Monday issued notices to National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and others for April 26 on a civil miscellaneous application filed by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz for return of her passport. The bench also sought exit control list (ECL) rules, on the next date of hearing. Justice Ali Baqar Najafi and Justice Farooq Haider heard the civil miscellaneous application. – APP

DC for continuation of supply to Ramzan Bazaras

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHAN: Deputy Commissioner Capt (Retd) Shoaib Ali has said that people are benefiting from Ramadan bazaars at discounted prices of food items. He further said that cheap supply of food items was being ensured in Ramadan bazaars. He expressed these views during a surprise visit to the cheap Ramadan Bazaar in Kahrorpaka Tehsil. Assistant Commissioner Kahrorpaka Ashraf Saleh was also present on the occasion. Deputy Commissioner Capt (ret) Shoaib Ali said that supply of all good quality items including meat, vegetables, ghee, sugar flour in Ramadan bazaars is being ensured till evening. He further said that the Punjab government has been urged to ensure availability of food items in the last ten days of Ramadan. He further said that the price of 10 kg bag of flour in Ramadan bazaars has been reduced to Rs. 400 while the discounted price of sugar has been reduced from Rs. 75 per kg to Rs. 70 per kg. The Deputy Commissioner directed Assistant Commissioner Kahrorpaka Ashraf Saleh to ensure availability of food items at fixed prices in general markets including Ramadan bazaars. A meeting of District Emergency Response Committee for Anti-Dengue was held under the chairmanship of Lodhran Deputy Commissioner Capt (ret) Shoaib Ali in Committee Room of his office. The meeting reviewed the activities related to anti-dengue campaign in the district. Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Capt (ret) Shoaib Ali said

Police recover missing girl Dua from Lahore

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: he 14-year-old teenager Dua Zehra – who had gone missing from Karachi a week back – has been found in Lahore. Following her recovery, the teenager issued a statement saying she went to Lahore from Karachi willingly. The Lahore police have taken her into their custody, while the Lahore and Karachi police are in touch and will share the updates soon. The police said that Dua tied the nuptial knot with a boy, who is a resident of Lahore. The marriage certificate of the teenager has been obtained by the police and is being verified. Meanwhile, the police officials and Sindh Women Development Minister

Syeda Shehla Raza reached the family's residence in Karachi's Golden Town to inform her parents about the development. The case of the mysterious disappearance of the teenage girl from Karachi's Al-Falah shook everyone. She went missing from the Golden Town area 10 days ago, triggering a sense of fear among the masses. Police conducted multiple raids but failed to recover the girl. The police had claimed that she might have left the house of her own choice but the family had rejected it. Earlier on April 22, the mother of the 14-year-old had warned of suicide outside Governor House if her daughter was not safely recovered.

"I want my daughter alive. I am a mother. I will not accept her body like

Zainab. I will keep the body outside Governor House if she is found dead," the mother had said. "Five days have passed and we are still looking for Dua," the frustrated father, Mehdi Kazmi, had told The News.

"The news running on the media about the recovery of my daughter from Sanghar is fake. Even the girl seen in the CCTV footage going on a Suzuki vehicle is also the daughter of my neighbour who was going to work when she was captured on CCTV footage," he had clarified.

Mehdi had said that there was a conspiracy to downplay his daughter's case by running such fake news on the media. "But I am telling I will not allow anyone to ignore my daughter's case," he had said.



KHARIAN: Assistant Commissioner Kharian Sajid Kaliar reading his favorite newspaper in his office. – DNA Photo by Anwar Chohan

Safe City Project to make Peshawar secure

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Mahmood Khan Monday said that Peshawar Safe City Project was a prerequisite to make the city completely safe from all aspects. The provincial government would provide all needed assistance and resources for this purpose, the Chief Minister said, adding that adherence to all relevant laws and maintaining transparency would be ensured at all cost in this connection. The Chief Minister was presiding over a high level meeting regarding proposed Peshawar Safe City Project here where in cabinet members including Taimur Saleem Jhagra, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Chief Secretary, IGP and officers concerned were present. The meeting was told that tangible development has been made in Peshawar Safe City Project as its pilot project has been initiated from Hayatabad and within one week of time the plan would be given final shape to implement the pilot project. – APP

Pakistan must minimize its imports

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD. Pakistan must carve out a new strategy to minimize imports through the development of the import substitution industry on a fast-track basis to overcome the ill impacts of the Russia-Ukraine war on Pak economy, said Engineer Ahmad Hassan Chairman FCCI standing committees on Research & Development and CPEC. Addressing the joint meeting of the two standing committees, he said that current global GDP is 84 trillion dollars. "Out of it the share of Russia is around 3.11 percent", he said and added that this war has created complicated and multiple issues of inflation and supply chain in addition to aggravating the economy related worries of the third world countries. He said that volatile economies like Pakistan would have to face major issues although; these are not directly linked with this war. He said that Pakistan should minimize its dependence on imports by developing its mother industry consisting of steel and production of machinery at local level. He also quoted the example of Vietnam and said that its exports have jumped to 36 billion dollars only due to

indigenization and we must follow this model to achieve economic stability.

Engineer Ahmad Hassan said that Pakistan needs dynamic, creative and visionary young entrepreneurs and in this connection, we need a quality business institute like LUMS (Lahore University of Management Sciences). He said that the R & D committee is contemplating arranging a series of awareness lectures by renowned scholars on young entrepreneurs, human resource, LEAN and solar energy. About CPEC, he said that Chinese investors are reluctant to set up new hi-tech industrial units in Pakistan under the second phase of CPEC as the Government has failed to clear the pending dues of Chinese power houses. He said that the Government must fulfil its legal obligations so that the second phase of CPEC could be accomplished without any delay by 2025. The meeting also discussed a wide range of global, regional and national level issues including shortage of water, global warming, value addition of locally produced raw material. The meeting was also attended by Dr. Khurram Tariq, Engineer Asim Munir, Dr. Muhammad Arif and Dr. Asif Javed.

14 more AJK ministers sworn in

MUZAFFARABAD: Fourteen more ministers of the new Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) cabinet took oath here at the Prime Minister House on Monday. President Sultan Mehmoood Chaudhary administered oath to them. Those ministers sworn in included Sardar Mir Akbar Khan, Dewan Ali Khan Chughtai, Chaudhary Ali Shan, Chaudhary Muhammad Akbar Ibrahim, Chaudhary Muhammad Rasheed, Abdul Majid Khan, Chaudhary Arshad Hussain, Chaudhary Azhar Sadiq, Zafar Iqbal Malik, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Sardar Fahim Akhtar Rabani, Akmal Sargala, Chaudhary Maqbool Ahmad and Chaudhary Yaser Sultan. Two ministers Khawaja Farooq and Chaudhary Akhlaq had taken oath with the swearing in of new Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas few days back. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Charge d' Affairs to Pakistan, Pang Chunxue, called on Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar. – DNA

Islamabad POST
Available in following cities

ISLAMABAD
Qamar News Agency
03105460372

RAWALPINDI
Asim News Agency
03435802610

KARACHI
Nazir Siyal
03337554016

PESHAWAR
Zarbagh News Agency
03005412069

FAISALABAD
Ishfaq Mughal
03007689850

GUJRAT
M. Yoosuf Bhutta
03338436820

JHELUM
Iqrah News Agency
03005412069

KHARIAN
Ijaz News Agency
03068863870

LALAMUSA
Gulzar Ahmed Noshi
03359494788

SARA-I-ALMAGIR
0300 5428178

National Days and Armed Forces Days**APRIL**

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

**Hotels & Restaurants**

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

**Airlines**

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
-----------------------	---------

**Emergency**

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

**Enquiry**

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

**Hospitals**

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

**Departments**

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....	9209224
Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Water Tank

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

ICCI urges government not to withdraw amnesty scheme

ICCI President said that Pakistan badly needed industrialization to create jobs for youth, encourage local and foreign investment and improve exports

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has shown great concerns over the government intentions to consider withdrawing the tax amnesty scheme for industrial sector under the IMF pressure and termed it a disappointing move as it would hurt the industrial growth in the country and shake the confidence of investor who wanted to invest in Pakistan under this scheme. He urged that the government should reconsider its intention and not to withdraw the tax amnesty scheme for the industrial sector as it would have a negative

impact on the economic growth of the country. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that ICCI has been constantly stressing upon the government to announce a package for industrial sector on the pattern of construction package and the business community was quite satisfied when an incentives-laden tax amnesty scheme for industrial sector was announced in the first week of March 2022, which encouraged industrial promotion, revival of sick industrial units and foreign investment in industrial sector. He said that this amnesty scheme was warmly welcomed by the entrepreneurs and investors as it had created new opportunities for industrial promotion and more investment in the industrial sector.



However, there are indications that on the demand of the IMF, the government was considering withdrawing the amnesty scheme, which would create more disappointment in the business community and the potential investors. ICCI President said that Pakistan badly needed industrialization to create jobs for youth, encourage local and foreign investment and improve exports. The amnesty scheme was a good move to achieve these goals. However, it was unfortunate that before the start of implementation on the tax amnesty scheme, there were reports that it would be withdrawn. He emphasized that the government should accelerate the pace of work on the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs)

under CPEC and implement the industrial amnesty scheme as it would boost industrialization in the country and contribute to strengthening the economy. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan, Vice President ICCI said that Pakistan was facing a rising trade deficit as our imports much more than our exports. They said that one good option to overcome the trade deficit was to promote industrialization and exports. They said that the tax amnesty scheme for the industrial sector was important to realize these goals and stressed that the government should not consider withdrawing it in the larger economic interest of the country.

Govt notifies transfer, posting of officers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday issued notification of appointment and transfer of senior officers. According to the notification issued by Establishment Division, Sherbaz Khan Magsi (OMG / BS-18), Section Officer, Finance Division has been posted as Special Duty (OSD) of the Establishment Division immediately and till further orders. However, Zubair Akbar Yousafani (OMGBS-17 Probationer / Trainee), who is currently posted at the Secretariat Training Institute (STI) for the 44th Special Training Program, has been dismissed from the office. Management Group, under Rule 5 (2) of Government Servants (Application for Service and Post) Rules, 1966, with immediate effect. - APP

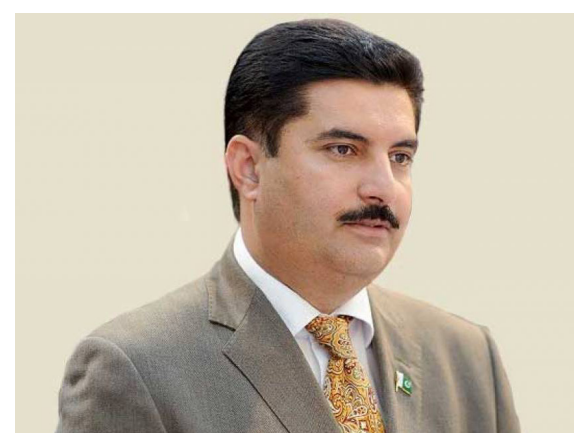
PTDC, PBSA to jointly promote eco-friendly youth tourism

PTDC and PBSA recently signed a Memorandum of Understand (MoU)

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and Pakistan Boys Scouts Association (PBSA) would jointly promote eco-friendly youth tourism among boy scouts across the country. In this regard, PTDC and PBSA recently signed a Memorandum of Understand (MoU), which would assure cooperation between both the organizations for sharing information and opportunities to contribute to each others initiatives and work. In a statement issued here, PTDC Managing Director Aftabur Rehman Rana said that the effort would go long way in adding the capacity building of boy scouts and giving them a healthy environment besides their regular activities as tourism takes people close to nature, opening more opportunities of working with a health mind. Various outdoor activities such as hiking, trekking, nature study camps, environment care events, leadership development workshops and capacity building events would be arranged to enhance the capacity of scouts. - APP

Faisal Kundi invites opposition to discuss electoral reforms with govt

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Faisal Karim Kundi Monday said the opposition should play a responsible role in the parliament and invited PTI leadership to hold talks with the government on electoral reforms for bringing political stability in the country. Talking to PTV News, he said that PTI leadership should demonstrate political maturity for promotion of democracy in the country, adding that the PPP is a democratic party and believes in the policy of political reconciliation and dialogue for the resolution of problems in the country. "PPP policies are directed towards the welfare of com-



mon people and we want the policy of reconciliation not confrontation by taking along all political forces for the best national interest", he added. Pakistan People's Party was

constitution was supreme in the country and every institution should play its role under the constitution so that the country could be brought out of crisis. Replying to a question, he mentioned that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met with PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif in London and congratulated him on the successful vote of no-confidence against former prime minister Imran Khan, adding that both leaders discussed the overall political situation in the country and expressed their determination to move forward with mutual understanding and consensus in national political affairs. - APP

Hurriyat leaders to work only under banner of single APHC

ISLAMABAD: There was consensus that political workers and leaders of various factions of Hurriyat will henceforth work only under the banner of single All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and shall strive to achieve the people's right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. According to Kashmir Media Service, the APHC spokesman in Srinagar said in utter disregard to the internationally-recognized disputed nature and statehood of Jammu and Kashmir, India unilateral-

ly and illegally annexed it and APHC leaders and activists were arrested and black law Public Safety Act (PSA) was excessively used. He deplored that besides planned murders and arson, no stone was left unturned to change the demographic complexion of the Muslim majority territory by settling non-state subjects following the footsteps of Israel. It was under these circumstances that the organizations and leaders of APHC, hitherto, reaffirmed their pledge to forge unity and take the ongoing move-

ment for right to self-determination to its logical conclusion, he added. The spokesman said that it was not only the demand and wishes of Jammu and Kashmir masses but Qaid-e-Tehreek Shaheed Syed Ali Gilani in his life had also urged to have unity amongst all factions and forums. It would not only strengthen the movement but would also be a tribute to our martyred leaders who longed for it, he maintained. He said that the participants were unanimous in suggesting that the office

bearers of APHC shall be democratically elected and to avoid recurrence of split all precautionary measures would be taken lest we fall prey to machinations of the occupying power, India. He added that steps taken by India on and after 5th August 2019 warranted unification of APHC. Both factions of Hurriyat along with all other organizations made unification possible. APHC umbrella will further be strengthened and expanded to all regions including Jammu and Ladakh, the spokesman said. - APP

Pakistan's regional exports increase 23.50% in 3 quarters

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 23.50 percent in first three quarters of fiscal year (2021-22), as compared to the corresponding quarters of last year. The country's exports to seven regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$3440.687 million, which is 14.51 percent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$23699.090 million during July-March (2021-22), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Pakistan carried out its border trade with the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and Maldives. Pakistan's exports to China posted growth of 51.27 percent to \$2126.778 million in nine months of this year from \$1405.890 million during last year while exports to Bangladesh also increased by 47.94 percent to \$648.936 million from \$438.626 million. The country's export to Afghanistan however dropped by 50.50 percent to \$369.382 million this year from \$746.347 million whereas exports to India also dipped by 54.21 percent to \$1.006 million from \$2.197. - DNA

Eid shopping gains momentum in capital

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With the start of the last Ashra of Ramadan, Eid shopping is picking up momentum in the capital city as a rush of buyers is being witnessed in almost all markets and shopping malls after Iftari till late at night. A number of local brands have displayed the latest Eid editions of dresses, shoes, and other essential accessories to attract buyers and gain maximum profits. The young girls along with their family members come out for shopping soon after breaking fast and are seen busy buying shoes, cosmetics, ready-made garments, eye-catching artificial jewelry, multi-colored bangles,

and other items for the upcoming festival of eid celebrations, showed a PTV report. Like previous years, this year too, a colorful variety of stalls have been set up in different cities of the country for Eid in which various types of cosmetics, earrings, glittering bangles, embroidered clothes, and jewelry have been displayed, said a citizen. The customers' are gradually picking up and hopefully it will further go up as Eid-ul-fitar approaches," said a vendor while selling bangles on road. Hawkers also made the brisk sales of clothes, footwear, cosmetics, and other goods as these products are generally purchased by low-income people ahead of Eid, said another citizen.



ISLAMABAD: Former president Supreme Court Bar Association, Syed Qalb-e-Hassan along with senior bar leaders from Sindh called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tatar. - DNA

Pak Army helps Al-Shifa arranging free eye camps

President of Al-Shifa Trust Major General (R) Rehmat Khan, said this while briefing media persons about the outreach program achievements in 2021-22, said a news release

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army has supported Al-Shifa Trust to set up free eye camps in different remote areas including Waziristan, Malakand, Baluchistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Chitral. President of Al-Shifa Trust Major General (R) Rehmat Khan, said this while briefing media persons about the outreach program achieve-

ments in 2021-22, said a news release. He said that free eye camps were held in the underprivileged areas including Loralai, Chaman, Skardu, Chitral, North and South Waziristan and Malakand. About 17000 children were screened for different eye diseases in girls' and boys' schools and surgical camps were established conducting 2500 surgeries, he said. Major General (R) Rehmat Khan said that Pak Army provided us with

foolproof security, transport and other facilities for teams of doctors conducting camps in difficult terrains, he added. In some areas of South and North Waziristan, Army personnel provided food and accommodation and arranged all other things paving way for treatment and surgeries for the people of remote areas. The complicated cases from those areas were referred to Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Rawalpindi, he

said, adding that the trust started an outreach program in 1992 and its free eye camps cover the whole of the country. Giving details, he said that Al-Shifa Centre for Community Ophthalmology (ACCO) delivers quality eye care at the doorstep of the rural and underserved populations. The trust runs one of the widest spread outreach programmes for the prevention of blindness and more than one million patients

have been treated in rural areas so far including 600 surgeries. On the occasion, Dr Tariq Usman, General Manager of the Al-Shifa Centre for Community Ophthalmology said Al-Shifa Trust will increase the number of free eye camps in the remote areas where the patients lack access and resources for quality medical facilities. He said that out of the box solutions are needed to deal with the menace of blindness.

IRSA releases 87759 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 87759 cusecs water from various run stations with an inflow of 89383 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1080.00 feet, which was 30.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded a 28824 and 28,000 cusecs respectively. - APP

Briefs

Sufficient fuel stocks available in country: OGRA

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) spokesman Imran Ghaznavi on Monday said sufficient quantity of diesel and petrol was available to meet consumers' needs across the country, rejecting speculations of fuel shortage in a few pockets of interior Punjab. He, in a brief press note, said the authority in collaboration with law enforcement agencies and district management was minutely monitoring the situation. "Anyone found involved in hoarding or short supply shall be dealt with as per the law," the spokesman warned. - APP

MoDP Dep. to be further modernised: Israr Tareen

RAWALPINDI: Minister for Defense Production Muhammad Israr Tareen on Monday said the defense production institutions would be further strengthened and modernized and all possible assistance in this regard would be provided to them. The Minister made his maiden visit to the ministry here where on his arrival the Secretary along with senior officials briefed him, said a news release. The Federal Minister was given a detailed briefing on the Ministry and its subsidiaries. - APP

HEC starts online equivalence facility

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has launched a completely paperless online system for equivalence of degrees awarded by the foreign universities in order to facilitate students at their door step. According to the HEC, the online facility will be available w.e.f. April 25, 2022 (Monday) today. The applicants will no more be required to submit hard copies of their documents. The applicants will need to fill online equivalence application form available at eservices.hec.gov.pk. He/she will fill the required details, upload necessary documents, pay the fee challan (generated online) in any HBL bank or transfer the required fee to HEC income account (17427900133401) and upload the receipt, it added. - APP

Ranjha warns PTI leaders of legal action

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader MNA Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha Monday warned the leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf of legal action for committing contempt of court and leveling baseless allegations against elected lawmakers and national institutions. Addressing a press conference here, he asked the Chairman PTI and former deputy speaker Qasim Suri to apologize to the nation and elected lawmakers for telling lies about a foreign conspiracy allegedly hatched against Pakistan as the thorough probe into the matter found these claims baseless. Imran Khan took the cover of a so-called foreign conspiracy and created chaos when he failed to survive the no-confidence motion, he said, adding that Qasim Suri's unconstitutional ruling not only attempted to damage the Constitution and democratic values but also hurt the feelings of every Pakistani. "A defamation notice will be served to Qasim Suri while the nation will launch a movement against all those who violated the constitution," he added. The PML-N leader also said that Chairman PTI had been using delaying tactics to avoid ruling in the foreign funding case for the last 8 years. - APP

Indian minorities must unite against repression

Says human rights violations were unstoppable; the scariest among which was the systematic dilution of fundamental elements of Muslim identity

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Indian government had crossed all limits and had violated the fundamental human rights, especially in case of minorities, in particular Muslims, based in India, said Lieutenant General Raza Khan, Former President National Defense University (NDU). He was speaking at a webinar titled 'Ban Culture: A Way to Create Akhand Bharat'. The session was organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Monday. Lieutenant General Khan was of the opinion that the plight of the Indian Muslims

was a major concern in the present times and that it was imperative to chalk out distinct roles for the international community, and in particular, the OIC as the representative of the Muslim world to overcome such brazen abuse of power. He said that Akhand Bharat was the slogan of RSS which aimed at reunifying the 10 countries of subcontinent including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and even Myanmar (Muslim countries). However, all that was happening in India (i.e., prohibiting Friday prayer, banning Hijab, mob violence against minorities) was the anti-thesis of this mythology of

Akhand Bharat. He added that the current demography of the Indian prisons was a narration of the plight of the minorities in India, as most of the convicted felons in the Indian prisons were either Muslims or Dalits. He said that the human rights violations were unstoppable; the scariest among which was the systematic dilution of fundamental elements of Muslim identity. Minorities in India, particularly Muslims were strategically pushed down the economic ladder, rendering them unable to rise as equal citizens. He said that today 33% of Indian minority including Indian

Muslims and lower caste Dalit were multidimensional poor. Despite the fact that the Indian Muslims were the third largest Muslim population, their representation in the Indian parliament remained at an all-time low since the partition, he added. While discussing the Citizenship Amendment Act, he said that the Act was a reflection of Nazism, controlling the award of citizenship at the government's own whims. The behaviour that was being meted out to the Muslims in India was a clear indication of mainstream Islamophobia, he said. He added that the abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A had

turned the Kashmir valley into a huge prison altogether. Additionally, the attempts to alter the demography of the Kashmir valley were also a gross human rights violation. He said that the rising Islamophobia, particularly with reference to India was discussed at lengths during the recent OIC session here in Islamabad. However, a more consolidated response to such state-sponsored Islamophobia was the need of the hour. More importantly, he added, it was vital for the Indian Muslims to stand up for themselves as being the third largest Muslim population was not something ordinary.

AIU provides last chance for admission

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) has offered admissions to MA/MSc programs in the second phase of spring semester 2022. Students can apply till May 9 with late fee charges. According to the HEC policy, these admissions have been offered for the last time.

Admissions in Teacher Training Programs including Associate Degree in Education (ADE), B.Ed, MA (Education) and M.Ed are also open. Admission forms and prospectuses for all these programs are available online on the University website and candidates can apply online.

According to Director Admissions, Syed Zia-ul-Hasnain Naqvi, this is the last chance for students to take admission in the MA / MSc programs offered till May 9. Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum has expressed the hope that the students will take full advantage of this opportunity. He directed all the regional heads to provide full support and guidance to the students. - APP

Daewoo Gas signs contract with Chinese company

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Daewoo Gas has signed a Master Engineering Procurement Construction and Finance (EPCF) contract with China National Chemical Engineering Construction Company (CNCEC) under which CNCEC would design, construct and finance an off-shore LNG terminal. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, the terminal would be complete with topside equipment to enable LNG filling into ISO containers for use in Pakistan. The specialized LNG containers will be moved by trucks all over Pakistan where LNG will be re-gasified at client sites. According to a statement from Daewoo, "At its peak, Daewoo Gas' terminal will handle 10,000 metric tons of LNG per day, improve Pakistan's en-

ergy supply, create thousands of jobs nationally, and reduce carbon emissions." The total foreign investment in this project including the terminal, facilities, LNG logistics and supply infrastructure is estimated to be US \$300 Million. Shahid Karim, chief executive officer of Daewoo Gas, remarked: "We plan on operationalizing the terminal within a year, before summer 2023, at Pakistan's LNG zone in the Arabian Sea." Daewoo Gas also plans to use the LNG in its own long-distance bus and truck fleet operated by Daewoo Express as a substitute for more expensive and polluting diesel. CNCEC Chairman Hu Liufang states: "We welcome the award of this significant contract by Daewoo Gas and look forward to designing and constructing world largest VLNG terminal for off-shore installation. This large and ambitious project

represents the ideals of CPEC industrial cooperation and technology transfer between the brotherly countries of China and Pakistan." Sameer Chishty, chairman of Asiapak Investments, which is the holding company for Daewoo Gas, was present at the signing ceremony and commented, "AsiaPak Investments is committed to innovative technology projects in Pakistan's energy sector, a country with a significant energy need for industry and households. Through this VLNG project, AsiaPak Investments contributes to further strengthening Pakistan and China's Iron Brotherhood. We are grateful to all the stakeholders especially OGRA, Port Regulators and Government of Pakistan for their encouragement and support, ensuring uninterrupted supply of affordable energy to the people of Pakistan."

16 outlaws including 5 drug peddlers held

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have arrested 16 outlaws including five drug peddlers from different areas of the city and recovered 5550 gram hashish, 1307 gram heroin, seven pistols with ammunition, 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 drug peddling and looting people. Following these orders, SSP (Operations) Faisal Kamran directed all zonal officers to accelerate their efforts to curb the crime in the city. According to the details, Islamabad police teams rounded up 16 criminals from different places of a city in last 48 hours. A CIA police team arrested a drug peddler during special checking in Sector I-8 identified as Waqar Ali and recovered 5000 gram of hashish from his possession. Similarly PS Bhara Kahu arrested two accused namely Sharafat Hussain and Aftab and recovered 1130 gram heroin and one 30 bore pistol with ammunition from their possession. PS Golra arrested two accused during snap-checking namely Akhtar and Haider Ali and recovered two 30 bore pistols with ammunition from their possession. - APP

Safety of the citizens, priority of police: IGP

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police is committed to resolve public grievances on priority and take all possible measures for the safety and security of the citizens besides maintaining law and order in the federal capital. It was stated by the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas while listening issues and grievances of public as well as retired and serving officials during 'khuli kacheri' held at Central Police Office on Monday.

The IGP directed all the police officials to adopt courteous attitude with the complainants visiting police stations and accomplish their responsibilities in a professional manner. "Lethargic attitude with the public is intolerable and such officials would be punished" he added. During the 'khuli kacheri', Islamabad Police chief listened to the grievances of the citizens and marked their applications to the concerned officers for timely action on merit. He also directed them to send reports to his offices in the given time frame. Muhammad Ahsan Younas emphasized that Islamabad police would not leave any stone unturned to save the lives and property of the citizens adding that Islamabad police is taking many steps to facilitate public. - APP

Cleanliness of nullahs at D-12 to begin soon: CDA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Monday said a cleanliness drive for nullahs passing through sector D-12 would be commenced soon to ensure smooth flow of water from the drains. The authority had allocated Rs 40 million for the purpose while tenders would be floated soon in the news papers, said director sanitation Fateh Maku. Talking to APP on Monday, he said heavy machinery would be deployed to clean the drains, besides erecting fences on the banks so that garbage and sewage cannot enter the drains. - APP

Broadband service:USF launches seven projects of worth Rs.8b

ISLAMABAD: Universal Service Fund (USF) has launched seven more projects worth over Rs 8 billion to provide broadband services to over 2.5 million people in the un-served and under-served areas of the four provinces, including Rs 3.5 billion projects for Balochistan. According to an official of USF, the number of projects for providing optical fiber cable and broadband services from 2018 to date has reached a record 56 projects and the total cost (subsidy) has exceeded to Rs 52 billion. The provision of broadband services to the residents of the un-served and under-served areas of the country is as much needed as for the big cities, he said. The implementation of projects for the four provinces has been ensured under the rules and regulations, the projects worth Rs 3.57 billion have been approved in the recent BoD meeting in principle, giving special importance to the deprived Balochistan. - APP

Baloch for effective role of ministry in facilitating people

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Agha Hassan Baloch Monday gave directives to enhance the effective role of the ministry in facilitating people particularly in underprivileged areas. He was chairing a briefing on the progress of Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) projects under the ministry and gave directions. Federal Secretary for Ministry of Science and Technology, Humaira Ahmed and heads of all attached departments briefed the minister regarding the ongoing projects and their progress. The minister was pleased to know that the ministry was working on a variety of initiatives that would boost the country's socio-economic status. He appreciated the work of all departments and also gave directions for equitable progress in all provinces. He directed that a state of the art forensic lab must be established in Balochistan to facilitate the local people as well as those of nearby regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. He expressed that people in distress

should not be made to wait for weeks to get their samples tested from the major forensic lab in Lahore. He was of the view that skill development centers must be established in multiple areas of Balochistan in order to empower the locals to maximize their employment opportunities under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He also reiterated that three new campuses of COMSATS University at Quetta, Jafarabad, and Gwadar, that are already approved, be established on priority basis to provide state of the art higher education facilities in general and uplift the standard of education in the field of Science and Technology in particular for the socio-economic uplift of the people of Balochistan. Agha Hassan acknowledged the efforts of the ministry to provide quality education to the people of Balochistan through Science Talent Farming scheme and upgradation of three schools at Quetta, Pishin, and Qila Saifulah to the STEM program. - APP

Rupee gains 70 paises against dollar

ISLAMABAD: Exchange rate of Pak Rupee strengthened by 70 paises against the US Dollar in the interbank trading on Monday and closed at Rs186.04 against the previous day's closing of Rs 186.74. According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 185.25 and Rs 187 respectively. The price of Euro also depreciated by Rs 1.90 and closed at Rs 199.69 against the previous day's closing of Rs 201.59. The Japanese Yen lost one paisa to close at Rs 1.45, whereas a decrease of Rs 2.67 was witnessed in the exchange rate of British Pound, which was traded at Rs 237.09 as compared to its last closing of Rs 239.76. The exchange rates of Emirates Dirham and Saudi Riyal decreased by 19 paises to close at Rs 50.65 and Rs 49.60 respectively. - APP

ICT Police to continue drive against professional begging: SSP

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations) Islamabad Muhammad Faisal Kamran on Monday said the ICT Police continued its drive to check professional begging in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). The SSP, in a statement, said during the crackdown launched on the directives of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Muhammad Ahsan Younas, some 4,573, beggars including 54 handlers, had been held during the last four months. Cases were registered against the handlers, while child beggars were shifted to shelters homes and protection centers for their proper upbringing and making them responsible citizens. He said he had formed special squads, which would continue the campaign against the professional alm-seekers. The squads' performance would be reviewed on daily basis, he added. He said the social evil would be curbed and those backing the professional beggars would be dealt with an iron hand. Strict action to be taken against those who forced children and women to adopt the ugly business, he added. The SSP directed all the superintendents of police to keep vigilant eye on the beggars outside mosques, Imambargahs as well as at markets, and ensure arrest of the professional alm-seekers. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate, Mirza Muhammad Afridi exchanging views with a delegation led by Shaoquett Chaher Moselmne, member of the Legislative Council (MLC) of New South Wales (NSW), Sydney, Australia at parliament house. - DNA

Israeli actions threaten stability

IN the past two weeks, more than 200 Palestinians were wounded as a result of Israel's use of force, according to the United Nations. Israeli actions, the UN said, "must be promptly, impartially, independently and transparently investigated." The situation was calmer over the weekend following high level interventions by a number of Arab countries including the UAE, Egypt and Jordan. "Our region needs stability and to work together in order to move forward in development along all paths so as to achieve the aspirations of our peoples for progress and prosperity," Shaikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, told his Israeli counterpart in a telephone call. He emphasised the need for calming the situation and the immediate end to any practices that violate the sanctity of the Al Aqsa Mosque.

Arab foreign ministers, who met in Amman on Friday, condemned the Israeli attacks against worshippers at Al Aqsa Mosque, which have escalated dangerously during the month of Ramadan. They warned that "the Israeli measures threaten to ignite a cycle of violence and pose a substantial threat to security and stability in the region and the world."

Israel might be tempted to use the Ukrainian crisis as a cover to intensify its non-stop illegal efforts to change the legal, the historical and the demographic situation in the occupied holy city. But that will be a serious mistake.

Denying the Palestinians their inalienable right to establish an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital, will kill whatever glimmer of hope that is left of reaching a peaceful and just settlement to the world's longest running conflict. The international community, especially the UN Security Council, must thus take immediate and effective action to stop these illegal Israeli practices.

Recent years raised the hopes of reviving the peace process following the Abraham Accords. The agreements created some momentum for regional collaboration in different developmental sectors.

The momentum needs to be defended and allowed to grow for the sake of this region's future generations. But the recent actions in and around Al Aqsa compound, one of Islam's holiest sites, don't bode well.

Therefore, Israel must end its actions immediately, stop provocative actions by the illegal settlers, and abide by the international resolutions that call for respecting the historical and demographic stance of Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied territories.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 298

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



The next step?

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

THE recent turn of events in the political spectrum of Pakistan compels us to question our future. It seems we are living in the pre-PTI era once again - the time when Imran Khan was leading rallies across Pakistan against the Sharif Family. For decades we have been witnessing a cycle of events that look too familiar. One enters as the leader while the other conspires against them through internal or external forces. The US has a two-party system - which is easier than managing the plethora of parties we have in our country. A two-party system works best - although corruption and dirty politics are a part of every system. We cannot implement a two-party system that will be seen as a glass ceiling by those at the helms of affairs or perhaps an order passed by those in Washington. We have to adhere to our system. But a system must lead to progress and development. There is no shortcut. A leader - in the government or the opposition - must create avenues for the growth of his party, leading to the growth of his constituencies that eventually help the country move towards progress. The recent tragic fire in Dadu that took the lives of women and children and destroyed more than fifty homes is just one example of the bleak system of governance we have in the interior, remote parts of Sindh. This is just one city or district. One cannot even imagine the life these people are living in the far-flung areas that are not connected with cities or with modern life. The next step for Pakistan is not for the leaders to earn votes but to develop the areas they got the votes in the first place. This will require systematic planning, vision, honesty, dedication, and accountability. One wonders if these attributes are still present among those who have vowed to lead this country!

The spirit of electoral reforms

Dr. Abdus Sattar Abbasi

The spirit should remain to establish importance and maintenance of the vote. According to Joshua A. Douglas from University of Kentucky, "Voting is the foundational concept for our entire democratic structure. We think of voting as a fundamental - the most fundamental - right in our democracy. When a group of citizens collectively elects its representatives, it affirms the notion..."

DUE to the proven history of election irregularities and manipulations we lost the spirit of electoral reforms by focusing merely on procedural interventions to ensure transparent and reliable elections. Our concern about procedural lacunas is not without reasons. I personally witnessed several irregularities in different elections at the grassroots during 1990s. I remember once I joined a colleague to be a polling agent of one of our colleagues contesting election for the provincial assembly of NWFP, now KPK. We were placed at the home station of one of the expected winning contestant; our candidate was not among those. However, after the lunch break there was a huge roar to oust both of us out of the polling station because they heard that another winning candidate ensured polling of all eligible votes on the voter list, even those who have died, in connivance

with the polling staff and they wanted to do the same here at their polling station. I initially resisted but when it came to guns I left the polling station for them along with my colleague.

It is one of the first-hand accounts; there are several other observations of rigging in different forms which still prevail in our electoral system including failure of RTS, counting behind the closed doors reportedly without polling agents at some places and most recent revelation of spoiling ten thousand votes of a winning candidate in Karachi while putting additional stamp on the ballot paper to favour weak candidate who eventually won a seat of National Assembly. All these instances do emphasize importance of electoral reforms to eliminate such operational and procedural problems during elections but there is a need to consider some other important aspects to strengthen democratic norms and establish genuine democracy according to our ground realities.

The spirit should remain to establish importance and maintenance of the vote. According to Joshua A. Douglas from University of Kentucky, "Voting is the foundational concept for our entire democratic structure. We think of voting as a fundamental - the most fundamental - right in our democracy. When a group of citizens collectively elects its representatives, it affirms the notion that we govern ourselves by free choice. An individual's right to vote ties that person to our social order, even if that person chooses not to exercise that right. Voting represents the beginning; everything else in our democracy follows the right to vote. Participation is more than just a value. It is a foundational virtue of our democracy."

It is indeed a frustration for masses when they observe obvious wastage of their votes as depicted in previous elections. Because in 2018 PTI took almost 32% votes, opposition got approximately 42%, while considerable votes of less popular parties were not represented in the parliament; we can witness nearly same trend in 2013 when PML (N) was on the treasury benches. Therefore we need to find ways to eliminate general distress of voter through electoral reforms for inclusive governments. Representation of all factions of the society is

important in the parliament including some factions of Baluchistan, ex-FATA territories, southern Punjab, and a few sectarian & ethnic groups who have not yet witnessed any considerable say in national policies; because, they usually emerge as important stakeholders during any wave of instability. Therefore it is important to develop a system which assimilates all these integral components of our society.

Current plurality based electoral system does not serve even in the Senate because it again reflects the same party based majority instead of philosophical equal representation of all provinces. The very purpose of upper house was to ensure equitable representation of provinces but it failed to accommodate all communities of the provinces because same members who make it to the provincial assemblies on the basis of majority votes elect members of the Senate, thus again depriving considerable voices in the society to be heard in the parliament.

We have a history of decades-long extremism in the Country which usually stems from the exclusion of smaller groups in the mainstream population due to their specific ethnic or sectarian approaches. These groups never stopped propagating their view of life and probably will not do so during our journey on the road of democracy because, probably, this is one of the good aspects of democracy where everyone is allowed to live with his/her thoughts and preferences. We are subject to unusual circumstances from the day one of our independence. Prevalence of these parties and clusters can't be denied in all provinces of the Country from north to south, their exclusion from power corridors remained fertile for global players to pursue their agendas in the Country. Our establishment always remained busy to coin counter narratives and curb foreign interventions. Probably the most effective strategy would be to ensure inclusion of such smaller parties and groups in the mainstream democratic processes through electoral reforms because we could not eliminate them through existing policies and perhaps would not be able to do so for at least another two to three decades.

Considering all these aspects it is quite appropriate to suggest electoral system based on proportional representation (PR). PR can probably provide remedy to several deep-rooted ailments of our electoral landscape.

Apparently it seems quite appropriate to opt for PR to accommodate all voices, to ensure true representation of every section of the society, to ensure that every vote is counted avoiding wastage of votes as largely happens in plurality based electoral system, to eliminate extremism from politics and the society, to encourage coalition and collaboration, to enhance turn-out and reduce apathy, and to exhibit preferences for both the candidates and the political parties. However, technically it needs extensive brainstorming to determine most appropriate type of proportional representation. In closed party-list PR there is absolutely no influence of voters on selection of candidates which, I think, is not a suitable option that voters only vote for the party and then party decides the list of successful candidates; it will be a new form of totalitarianism. Open party-list PR has some influence on at least the order in which party candidates are elected. Ranked voting provides an opportunity to the voter to rank their candidates in a sequence of 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc. and also accommodates transfer of votes to other constituencies. Mixed member PR provides an opportunity to the voters to elect the representative for their constituency as well as the vote for their preferred political party. It is indeed a matter which needs attention and scholarly reflections to bring novel electoral reforms for Pakistan. Nevertheless, not every system is without limitations, PR is also subject to several challenges including compromises, political gridlocks, and unstable governments and above all reduced accountability to voters. Therefore we have to move cautiously to maintain the spirit of electoral reforms for the benefit and prosperity of all stakeholders of the society.

- The writers is the Associate Professor Management Sciences Head, Center of Islamic Finance COMSATS University (CU) Lahore Campus drabdussattar@cuilahore.edu.pk

Redemption

AN immensely rich government contractor, envy of the town, was one day horrified to discover that he no longer remembered his daily prayers. He was advised that going through only the motions might also be acceptable. He tried doing that, suffered a stroke, was paralyzed and remained bed ridden for the rest of his life. The narrator gravely concluded. God had refused to accept his prayers whatever the form. Perhaps he was beyond redemption.

In the Muslim tradition there is no scope for absolute or any type of ecclesiastical reprieve in this world. The Muslims have instead daily prayers, an opportunity to directly make a confession before God and ask for His forgiveness. For the communication to be meaningful, the pious suggest a variety of ways. According to Qudratullah Shahab, while saying prayers either imagine yourself in the house of God or His Prophet (PBUH) and know the meaning of every word that you utter. Some suggest that apart from that, a believer must find exclusive time and place to speak with God, converse with Him, open his heart to Him and sincerely ask for His forgiveness. This experience can also be astoundingly rewarding.

God is absolute Mercy. He promises forgiveness 'again and again' if His creation turns towards Him in repentance. "If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place". (Bible, Revelation 2:4.5) But an uncanny protocol goes with it. The timing, as always is crucial. The hope for recovery in the 59th minute of the game becomes minimal. Last resolve must leave enough time to make amends and recover.

It is considered necessary for everyone to occasionally take a break, pause and reflect on one's moral and social obligations. But this honest introspection is absolutely incumbent upon people who 'loose and bind'. In the past it largely meant the rulers with the state power and the ulama with the clout of the pulpit. The field now is infinite

and players numerous. Rulers and those vying for power, media, (print and electronic) with its vast variety of features and accessibility, social media in its ever-increasing innovative forms, intellectuals, opinion-makers, the judiciary, bureaucracy and the military. They could be motivated, obsessed or purchased, all in their individual and collective capacity can 'loose or bind', manage perceptions, get away with murder like the Model Town tragedy and freely indulge in fifth generation warfare against own national purpose. Nationalism is an out of fashion emotion; challenging institutions is considered an exceptional scholarly audacity and promoting enemy narrative a show of intellectual ascendancy on the broader humanitarian canvass like "Aman ki Asha". Some are busy cutting the proverbial branch that houses their own abode and much more. The religious are another distraction. The use of religious card has assumed menacing proportions allowing mediocre thought to confuse serious national discourse.

Awareness of the imperceptible marks the difference between human beings and animals. Acts of omission are forgivable. Planned evil amounts to open defiance, tempting the might of the Almighty. Those 'who loose and bind' should be able to tell the difference between the Godly and the satanic, provided the conscience is not stifled and the ego is not allowed to grow bigger than life itself. It is their religious and social duty to intervene and correct the course. They will be answerable for their conduct on the day of reckoning. Also, it is the continued diffidence of the good that allows the evil to flourish and calamities to strike.

Pakistan is going through another crucial period in its life. A make-or-break situation. Those who 'loose and bind' need serious brainstorming. It is easy to support the formidable forces of the status quo, submit to the prevailing elite culture, partake of what the 'system' has to offer and wait for the utter moral degradation and ultimate humiliation.

Or pick up the gauntlet, willingly offer all the sacrifice necessary, discharge duty to God and His people and be worthy of earning God's pleasure in this world and the Hereafter. The second choice is hard, but highly gratifying in both the worlds.

It is highly improbable that he will repent and ask for God's mercy who is used to maintaining his private properties at government expense, the prince who thrives on the revenues of his revenue department, the judge who volunteers to work on a holiday to provide relief to a culprit wanted by the law enforcement, or the court that lies in waiting to pounce on its victim in the middle of the night. Try and read the writing on the wall. Let us not be misled by the officials' (lackeys') estimates of crowd strength of a few thousand. It would be like the proverbial pigeon closing its eyes on seeing the cat. The end might only leave remorse in its wake. The accused challenges the investigators to produce the proof as all the crooks know that it is almost impossible to prove a white-colored crime. Many cannot justify the accumulation of their wealth and yet claim respectability. Without professional assistance 'Accountability Bureau' could achieve precious little. The wicked went laughing. IK is a saint in the making, thanks to the untiring efforts of his adversaries. If he won, he would be hero, if he lost, he would be a martyr. Those who 'loose and bind' must decide whether we want freedom and accompanied hardships or give in to greed or threats for temporary comfort. We are running against time. Repentance might still mean redemption. The story of the contractor is one example, that of the Pharaoh is another. He at last did announce his belief in the 'God of Moses and Aron' but it was too late, the waves were already upon him. This is the time for us to act before we have to see the act of God.

- Major General @Askari Raza Malik is author of "Pakistan in Search of a Messiah"

Askari Raza Malik



IK is a saint in the making, thanks to the untiring efforts of his adversaries. If he won, he would be hero, if he lost, he would be a martyr. Those who 'loose and bind' must decide whether we want freedom and accompanied hardships or give in to greed or threats for temporary comfort. We are running against time. Repentance might still mean redemption

Briefs

War in Ukraine: Latest...

FROM PAGE 01

Bridget Brink to be the next US ambassador. Several European countries have also reopened their embassies in Kyiv since Russia withdrew its forces from the region. Russia's defence ministry announces a unilateral ceasefire at the Azovstal steel plant in the besieged port city of Mariupol, where Ukrainian forces have been holding out and a large group of civilians are sheltering. But Ukraine disputes that, saying Moscow did not agree to its request for the evacuation of wounded soldiers and civilians. Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulates French President Emmanuel Macron on his re-election following a run-off with far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, seen as closer to Moscow. "I sincerely wish you success in your state activities, as well as good health and well-being," says Putin. Moscow says it is expelling 40 German diplomats after Berlin sent 40 Russian diplomats packing earlier this month. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock reacts indignantly, saying Berlin's diplomats had "not done anything wrong" while the expelled Russian representatives "did not serve diplomacy for a single day". - Agencies

Russia warns US against...

FROM PAGE 01

Anatoly Antonov, Russia's ambassador to the United States, said such arms deliveries were aimed at weakening Russia but that they were escalating the conflict in Ukraine while undermining efforts to reach some sort of peace agreement. "What the Americans are doing is pouring oil on the flames," Antonov told the Rossiya 24 TV channel. "I see only an attempt to raise the stakes, to aggravate the situation, to see more losses." Antonov, who has served as ambassador to Washington since 2017, said an official diplomatic note had been sent to Washington expressing Russia's concerns. No reply had been given, Antonov said. "We stressed the unacceptability of this situation when the United States of America pours weapons into Ukraine, and we demanded an end to this practice," Antonov said. The interview was replayed on Russian state television throughout Monday.

1,500 destitute Afghans...

FROM PAGE 01

"We are thankful to China for providing assistance to the people of Afghanistan at this critical stage," Haqqani told Xinhua. The war-torn Afghanistan has been facing extreme economic problems since the defeat of the U.S.-led forces and their evacuation from Afghanistan last August. Washington has frozen more than 9.5 billion U.S. dollars of Afghanistan's assets in U.S. banks that further worsened the country's fragile economy. "I am grateful to China and other countries including the neighboring states for providing humanitarian assistance to us and hope such a cooperation will continue," an aid recipient Farid Ahmad, 35, who is also the head of a 10-member family, told Xinhua.

PM to visit KSA on commercial flight...

FROM PAGE 01

PTI leaders should not mislead the masses through false and baseless propaganda. She clarified that the prime minister would go to Saudi Arabia on a commercial flight and he would bear the expenses of his visit. For 10 years as Punjab's chief minister, Shehbaz Sharif used to pay his travel expenses out of his own pocket. Mairiyum Aurangzeb said as former information minister, Fawad should not make such a baseless statement against journalists as no media person was going to Saudi Arabia at the government's expenses. She said fake news was the hallmark of former information minister.

Pakistan envoy vows to further strengthen ties with Sweden

The SAIA board members talked about hackathon activities arranged by the organization and discussed the possibilities of collaboration in the future

DNA

STOCKHOLM: The Ambassador H.E Zahoor Ahmed had a meeting with board members of the Stockholm Association of International Affairs (SAIA). During the meeting, the board members were briefed about Pakistan's overall foreign policy, its rich culture, unique heritage and beautiful landscapes. Speaking on the occasion, the Ambassador said that we value our relationship with the Sweden and would like to further strengthen relations with the Nordic country in all spheres, especially political, defence, trade, economic, educational and technical cooperation. He added that Pakistan is home to the World's oldest civilizations including Mohenjo-Daro, Harappa and the Buddhist heritage in Taxila and elsewhere. The Ambassador said that Pakistan is predominantly a Muslim country, but the constitution guarantees equal rights for all its citizens, including the followers of other religions like Hinduism, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism,

Kalash and Zoroastrianism. The Ambassador said that like Sweden, Pakistan is committed to protect, preserve and promote its rich biodiversity, adding that both countries continue to show leadership in international climate efforts through their climate diplomacy. He highlighted that Pakistan hosted the "World Environment Day 2021" which is an acknowledgment of the country's strong credentials in combating environmental degradation and climate change. He also said that 'Stockholm+50' conference in June 2022 provides an opportunity to work together and enhance cooperation to tackle climate change. The SAIA board members talked about hackathon activities arranged by the organization and discussed the possibilities of collaboration in the future. They also showed interest to visit Pakistan for tourism purpose. The meeting ended with a short question and answer session. Office of the Spokesperson, Mofa Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad Utrikespolitiska Föreningen Stockholm (UFStockholm).



Ahsan Iqbal clarifies remarks about Cuba

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan Zener Caro has given his reaction in his Tweet in which he said, "Fortunately, Minister Ahsan Iqbal's disrespectful mention of Cuba in his press conference in Lahore does not represent and has nothing to do with Pakistan's true respect and deep affection for Cuba". At a media talk Iqbal had said that Pakistan wanted to become a strong country for which it needed a strong economy and positioning with the global economy. He said he did not want Pakistan to turn into Cuba or North Korea. "We have to set Pakistan on the path of [development, like] Malaysia, Turkey, China and South Korea," the minister had added.

IHC suspends order in...

FROM PAGE 01

political parties in the same period of time, maintaining that the commission targeted only PTI. It also demanded the court direct the ECP to scrutinise other political parties' accounts through the State Bank of Pakistan and publicise the account details after the scrutiny report. The PTI has nominated ECP and 17 political parties, including PML-N, PPP, MQM-P, JUI-F, AML, TLP, BAP, BNP and ANP as respondents in the case. On April 14, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani of IHC had ordered conclusion of foreign funding case of the PTI within 30 days, ruling that the ECP's role "is of important nature and same cannot be curtailed in any manner". It noted that the body is a "supervisory, regulatory and administrative body under the Constitution of Pakistan, 1973 to deal with the affairs of political parties, election and its results". It also noted that "no restriction could be imposed upon ECP to adopt any process of inquiry, investigation, scrutiny to reach out the mandate of assigned duty in terms of Article 17(3)".

Afghans with ID allowed to go home

FROM PAGE 01

pedestrians between the two countries through Torkham, Chaman and all other crossing points. Brief permissions for return of stranded Afghans on the eve of Eid was commenced in 2020 last when like of other international borders, Pak Afghan border was sealed in the wake of Corona situation. Like past, since mid of Ramadan, Afghan nationals are pouring in Torkham and Landi Kotal from all over the country. The tribesmen at Landikotal including stalwarts of different political parties are making appeals and requests to authorities for allowing these people. Tribal Journalist Mehrab Afridi who is president of Landi Kotal Press Club informed that hundreds of Afghans including women and children were stranded in the area from last several days. He confirmed that almost of these stranded people now returning to homes. Thousands of Afghans are illegally residing and engaged in economic activities in different areas of Pakistan, always preferring Eid celebration with their relatives in Afghanistan. From last three years, Pakistan allows exist of such people on the eve of Eid Ul Fitre and eid Ul Azha as well.

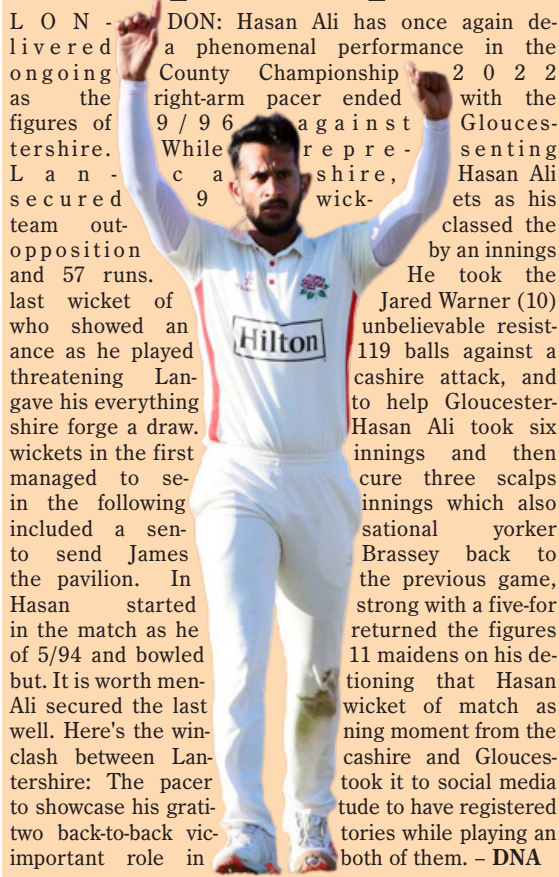
Ordinary passport issued to Nawaz

FROM PAGE 01

last week that a diplomatic passport was Nawaz's Sharif right and it would be issued to him. "It is unfortunate that a person who has been prime minister three times is being deprived of national citizenship," the interior minister had said. But the passport issued to Nawaz is not diplomatic but "ordinary". The Islamabad High Court (IHC) had Monday dismissed a petition challenging the possible issuance of a diplomatic passport to Nawaz. The court dismissed the petition stating that it is "based on unreliable material and is, therefore, frivolous".

Hasan Ali picks up 9 wickets in County Championship 2022

LONDON: Hasan Ali has once again delivered a phenomenal performance in the ongoing County Championship 2022 as the right-arm pacer ended with the figures of 9/96 against Gloucestershire. While representing Lancashire, Hasan Ali secured 9 wickets in his team's opposition and 57 runs. He took the last wicket of who showed an ace as he played threatening Langave his everything shire forge a draw. Hasan Ali took six wickets in the first three innings which also included a sensational yorker sent James the pavilion. In the match as he of 5/94 and bowled but. It is worth mentioning that Hasan Ali secured the last well. Here's the clash between Lancashire: The pacer to showcase his gratitude back-to-back important role in both of them. - DNA



Wimbledon's Russia ban faces difficult battle

PARIS: WTA president Steve Simon warned Wimbledon that they face "strong reactions" to their decision to ban Russian and Belarusian players and the week ahead could see more twists in the controversy which has split tennis. The All England Club (AELTC) said they had decided to bar the likes of Daniil Medvedev, Andrey Rublev, Aryna Sabalenka and Victoria Azarenka in response to the invasion of Ukraine. On Tuesday, the AELTC will hold its annual Wimbledon event launch where the saga will dominate the agenda. Meanwhile, ATP and WTA officials are expected to meet on the sidelines of the Madrid Open from next week to discuss their response to the crisis. As the Grand Slam tournaments are autonomous, possible sanctions by the ATP and the WTA could include a refusal to award ranking points at the June 27-July 10 Grand Slam tournament. That could reduce Wimbledon to the status of a high-profile exhibition event. The ATP does not seem inclined to take legal action, while according to French daily L'Equipe, which obtained an email sent by the WTA to its players, the body is studying "the actions that you (the players) could take according to the Grand Slam regulations". "I do think that you'll see some strong reactions that will come from us but what those are and how far they'll go is still to be determined," Simon told The Tennis Podcast at the weekend. "We don't have the same jurisdiction over the Grand Slams as we do over our own sanctioned events."



There are three potential avenues of action, Tatiana Vassine, a lawyer in sports law, told AFP. They lie in discrimination based on nationality, an attack on the freedom to work and the right to equal treatment. "It's a measure which it seems applies only to tennis players - other professionals of Russian and Belarusian nationality are able to continue their professional activity on English soil," she said. However, she believes that Wimbledon is only at the "declaration of intent" stage. "We must not underestimate the 'soft power' of sport," she said. The ATP and WTA have already described the ban as "unfair" and "very disappointing". World number one Novak Djokovic said it was "crazy", Rublev blasted the move as "complete discrimination" while the Belarus Tennis Federation believes the ban will "incite hatred". Wimbledon also faces the charge of double standards. They excluded German and Japanese players for several years after World War II while South African players were allowed to play during the apartheid era. "People take the position that sports and politics shouldn't match and shouldn't be intertwined, but that's not the reality," Simon added. "At times sports does cross into politics and here is a situation where politics is crossing into sports. It is real life. "The one thing that this sport has always agreed upon was that entry into our events has always been based upon merit and without discrimination." - Agencies

Tonali sends Milan back to summit



WEB DESK

ROME: Sandro Tonali scored in stoppage time as AC Milan came from behind to win 2-1 at Lazio on Sunday and retake top spot

from Inter Milan in Serie A, while Napoli's title hopes appear over after their meltdown in Empoli. Ciro Immobile gave Lazio an early lead at the Stadio Olimpico in Rome, but Olivier Giroud levelled shortly after half-

time before Tonali's late heroics kept Milan firmly in the title hunt. They moved back two points above of Inter, who beat Roma 3-1 on Saturday and have a game in hand Wednesday away to Bologna. Inter also knocked Milan out of the Italian Cup semi-finals in midweek. Ciro Immobile became the leading active scorer in Italy's top flight when he turned in a cross from Sergej Milinkovic-Savic inside four minutes. The Italy international's 181st Serie A goal took him past veteran Sampdoria striker Fabio Quagliarella as Immobile extended his league-leading haul for the season to 26.

Graeme Smith cleared of racism

JOHANNESBURG: Smith, 41, was among several Cricket South Africa (CSA) employees implicated in "tentative findings" made by the Social Justice and Nation Building (SJN) ombudsman last year. The report claimed Smith had engaged in racially biased and discriminatory behaviour on three counts as Proteas captain and CSA's director of cricket. However, Smith was cleared of all allegations by two independent advocates, who found "no evidentiary basis" the former opener had engaged in racial discrimination. - Agencies

Alcaraz youngest into ATP top 10

PARIS: Spanish star Carlos Alcaraz, aged 18, on Monday became the youngest player to enter the top 10 of the ATP world rankings since his compatriot Rafael Nadal did so at the same age in 2005. Alcaraz climbed two places to ninth in the world due to his straight-sets victory over Pablo Carreno Busta in the Open final on Sunday. Britain's Cameron Norrie drops out of the number 11. It was the third title for Alcaraz, the Miami Masters at the beginning of the month and the Rio tournament in February. Carreno Busta swaps places with another Spaniard Roberto Bautista Agut, the former climbing to 18 and the latter moving down one spot to 19th. Novak Djokovic still sits atop the standings despite losing to Russian Andrey Rublev in the final of the Belgrade Open. World number two Daniil Medvedev is out with a hernia problem. - Agencies

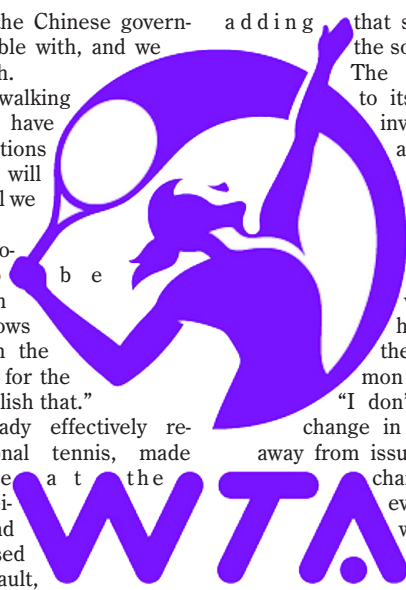
WTA not returning to China in 2022 over Peng case

The WTA, however, stuck to its demand for a formal investigation into Peng's allegations and an opportunity to meet with her privately to discuss the situation

WEB DESK

LONDON: The WTA is still working to find a resolution to the standoff with China over the Peng Shuai issue but will not return to the country this year, Tour chief Steve Simon said. Former doubles world number one Peng's wellbeing became a concern for the WTA after she posted a message on social media last November accusing China's former Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli of sexual assault. The post was subsequently removed and Peng disappeared from public view for three weeks. The following month, the WTA suspended all of its tournaments in China, a decision expected to cost the elite women's tour hundreds of millions of dollars in broadcasting and sponsorship. read more "We remain dedicated to finding a resolution to this," Simon told The Tennis Podcast. "We want to find a resolution that Peng can

be comfortable with, the Chinese government can be comfortable with, and we can be comfortable with. "We are not about walking away from China. We have suspended our operations there right now. We will continue to do that until we get to a resolution. "We will stay resolute. We do hope to be back there in 2023 with the resolution that shows progress was made in the space. That's a victory for the world if we can accomplish that." Peng, who had already effectively retired from professional tennis, made an appearance at the Winter Olympics in Beijing in February and denied she had accused anyone of sexual assault, adding that she herself had deleted the social media post. The WTA, however, stuck to its demand for a formal investigation into Peng's allegations and an opportunity to meet with her privately to discuss the situation. "We have not had any recent communication with Peng and the world has not seen Peng since the Olympics either," Simon said. "I don't think you will make change in this world by walking away from issues. You have to create change. It might not be everything we want. But we have to find a solution that finds that balance that allows us to go back and see progress in the area." The WTA has yet to announce its 2022 calendar for events after the U.S. Open Grand Slam in September, but Simon said the governing body would announce a "fairly solid" autumn schedule within the next two or three weeks. While there has been signs of collaboration between the ATP Tour and the WTA since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the men's Tour has not withdrawn its presence from China and will host four tournaments in the country this season. Simon said he respected the ATP's position. "Their difference is that ... they don't have a member that's affected there," Simon added. "They will have to make their own decisions at this point of time. "Would we love to have their support on what we are standing for there and the issues? Absolutely. But we are not trying to influence their decision in any way, it has to be theirs."



Briefs

Harry is "whipped" by Markle: Trump

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Former President Donald Trump has shared his opinion on Prince Harry and Meghan Markle's high-profile relationship, saying the prince is "whipped." Trump made the comments during a contentious interview with British TV host Piers Morgan, during which the former president appears to end the chat early, according to a teaser Morgan shared — but which Trump disputed.

"Harry is whipped, do you know the expression?" Mr. Trump said to Morgan, who replied that he's familiar with the phrase. "I won't use the full expression, but Harry is whipped like no person I think I've ever seen," Trump continued. "I'm not a fan of Meghan, I'm not a fan, and I wasn't right from the beginning. I think poor Harry is being led around by his nose."

"Do you think it's going to end?" the controversial host asked. "I do, I've been a very good predictor, as you know, I've predicted almost everything, it'll end, and it'll end bad," the former president replied. "I wonder if Harry's going to go back on his hands and knees and say please. You know, I think Harry's been led down a path."

Morgan has repeatedly criticized the Duchess of Sussex, with whom he had a brief friendship prior to her dating Harry. Meghan and Harry famously stepped down from their roles as senior royals in 2020 and moved to California. In September 2020, then-President Trump said during a press conference that he's "not a fan" of Meghan.

Dozens killed in violence in South Sudan

FOREIGN DESK

JUBA: Dozens of people have recently been killed in violence that includes beatings and sexual attacks in a volatile county in South Sudan, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan said Monday.

The mission said it documented 72 civilian deaths between Feb. 17 and April 7 in Unity State's Leer county. Among the victims was a local staffer with the humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders, it said. Sixty-four cases of sexual violence, including gang rapes, were recorded in Leer in the same period. The attacks were carried out by "armed youth" from the neighboring counties of Koch and Mayendit. "I am strongly appalled by these horrific attacks on civilians in Leer," Nicholas Haysom, special representative of the U.N. secretary-general for South Sudan, said in a statement. "We must all do everything we can to ensure that victims and survivors get the justice they deserve and receive the care and support they need." Markets, homes, humanitarian facilities and warehouses were looted and burned down. An estimated 40,000 people have fled the violence in Leer, with thousands reportedly crossing the Nile River to shelter in another state, that statement said.

UNSC must stop Israeli violence against Palestinians: Indonesia

Indonesian House Speaker Puan Maharani reminded the 29 member countries of the Asia and Africa Conference, including Indonesia, to fulfill their promise to help the Palestinian people in the struggle for independence.

NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: Indonesian House Speaker Puan Maharani has asked her government to urge the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to be more active to stop Israeli violence against Palestinians. The government must continue to take concrete actions to help the Palestinian people, Maharani said in a statement on Sunday.

She added that Indonesia can push the UN Security Council to take more active stance to stop violence in Palestine. The House Speaker recalled that her grandfather, Indonesia's first President Soekarno in his opening remarks during the Asia-Africa Conference 67 years ago had urged that the Asia and African countries must support the struggles for independence of those remained colonized in the two continents.

The Asian and African delegates had agreed to support Palestine's independence and asked for immediate implementation of the UN resolutions on Palestine.

Maharani reminded the 29 member coun-



tries of the Asia and Africa Conference, including Indonesia, to fulfill their promise to help the Palestinian people in the struggle for independence. Independence is the right of every nation in the world and there should be no more colonization by one na-

tion against another, especially in the modern era like today, she stressed.

"The liberation of Palestine from Israel's oppression will forever remain a debt to be repaid by Indonesia and other Asia-Africa Conference's participating countries that had pledged in Bandung," she said. Meanwhile Israeli occupation forces (IOF) on Monday made 16 detentions among Palestinian citizens during multiple raids targeted the occupied West Bank.

Local sources reported that the Israeli forces raided on the city of Hebron, and detained Iyad Awawdeh, brother of the hunger striking detainee Khalil Awawdeh.

The sources added that the Israeli forces re-detained several ex-detainees including Hamas leading member Khader al-Hurub, Ismael al-Hurub, Khalil al-Kharouf, Tawfik al-Hurub, and brothers Khader, Issa, Yusuf, Mohammed Deeb al-Hurub from the city of Hebron as well. The Israeli forces released Iyad Awawdeh and the brothers Khader, Issa, and Yusuf al-Hurub, several hours after detaining and interrogating them, the

sources pointed out. In addition, the Israeli forces detained Murshid Muhammad al-Zaqeq, along with his three sons named Muhammad, Muhannad, and Majdi all from the town of Beit Ummar and took them to an unknown destiny.

Regarding Jenin, the Israeli forces raided on the towns of Misilyah and Qabatiya and re-detained ex-detainees Salim Abu al-Rab and Amjad al-Damouni.

As to occupied Jerusalem, the Israeli forces detained Wael Sabta and Ismael Muhasen and took them for interrogation after breaking into their houses.

In the same context, the Israeli forces assaulted and detained a number of workers, including girls, in the town of Far'un in Talkarem. The Israeli occupation forces carry out raid and detention campaigns against Palestinian citizens across the occupied West Bank on a daily basis.

According to Palestinian figures, about 4,500 Palestinians, including 32 women and 160 children, are currently languishing in Israeli detention jails.

Biden selects Brink as U.S. envoy to Ukraine



WASHINGTON: President Biden plans to nominate veteran diplomat Bridget Brink to serve as the United States ambassador to Ukraine, the White House announced Monday.

Her nomination requires Senate approval, and if confirmed, Brink, the current U.S. ambassador to Slovakia, would take over as the top American diplomat in Ukraine as the nation continues to defend itself from Russia's invasion. A career foreign service officer, Brink has had assignments in Uzbekistan, Georgia, Cyprus and Serbia, and served as the deputy assistant secretary in the State Department's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. She also worked for the White House National Security Council.

The White House's formal announcement of Brink as Mr. Biden's pick for U.S. ambassador to Ukraine came after Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin traveled to Kyiv to meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The two are the highest-ranking U.S. officials to visit Ukraine's capital city since Russia invaded the country in late February. During the visit, Blinken told Zelenskyy of Mr. Biden's selection of Brink as ambassador. While the U.S. embassy in Ukraine is in Kyiv, the State Department moved embassy operations to Lviv in mid-February in response to Russia's build-up of troops along Ukraine's borders. Blinken told reporters after meeting with Zelenskyy that U.S. diplomats, who have largely been working in Poland since the start of the war in Ukraine, will begin returning to the country this week, after which the State Department will begin the process of looking at how to reopen the embassy in the capital. — Agencies

Amb. Moin invites GIC to tap Pakistan's potential

BEIJING: Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque invited Global Innovation Center (GIC) to invest and take advantage of friendly policies offered by the Pakistani government to Chinese investors. According to China Economic Net (CEN), the Ambassador highlighted the expanding science and technology cooperation between Pakistan and China. He also invited the Center to benefit from the initiatives and incentives taken by the Government of Pakistan to facilitate investment in Pakistan in ICT, New Energy Vehicles and emerging technologies, and he also assured of the Embassy's full support in this regard. He informed that GIC was planning to set up an office in Pakistan, and as well as establishing a China-Pakistan Trade, Energy and Investment Center in its Shenzhen office. — DNA



TEHRAN: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Iran Ali Alizada speaking on the occasion of iftar dinner he hosted at the Azerbaijan residence in Tehran. — DNA

China Window signs MoU with Harbin University

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: China Window, a center of Pak-China friendship in Peshawar, and Harbin Engineering University of China have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in various fields besides Student Exchange Program. Director of China Window Naz Parveen and Dean of Harbin Engineering University of China Zhang Qingbin signed the agreement. Under the agreement, the two institutions will exchange students, faculty, researchers and administrative staff; both institutions will also promote extra-curricular activities, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Monday. Zhang Qingbin while terming the agreement as a milestone between Peshawar and China said that not only affordable education opportunities will be available but also university scholarships will be given. He further said that both institutions will play a positive role in strengthening exemplary friendship between the two brotherly countries.

China Window, besides learning mandarin, is devoted to providing all information including Chinese arts, culture, political history, economic development and geography on China under one roof. China Window has played a crucial role in portraying a positive image of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) especially in northwestern Pakistan.

Azerbaijan, Armenia agree to meet for peace treaty talks

DNA

BAKU: The foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia on Monday agreed to hold meetings on a joint border commission and working group over a possible peace treaty.

"It was agreed to convene the meetings of the Joint Border Commission, as well as Working Group on the preparation of a peace treaty, in the near future," Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement following a phone call between the foreign ministers of Baku and Yerevan.

"The Ministers had an exchange of views as a follow-up to the agreements reached at the level of the leaders of both states," the statement added.

Baku and Yerevan "agreed on parameters of the participants in the Joint Border Commission," and discussed "the issues related to the continuation of steps in the humanitarian sphere," it further said. Meanwhile, the Armenian Foreign Ministry also confirmed



the agreement in a statement, saying the two sides "agreed on the structure of Commission on delimitation and border security." Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov discussed with his counterpart Ararat Mirzoyan "issues related to addressing humanitarian issues, preparing works on peace negotiations," the statement added.

Earlier this month, European Council President Charles Michel hosted a meeting between Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan in Brussels where the two sides expressed willingness to secure a peace agreement.

Relations between the former Soviet republics have been tense since 1991, when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Upper Karabakh, a territory internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions.

New clashes erupted on Sept. 27, 2020, and during the six-week war, Azerbaijan retook several cities and 300 settlements and villages. The conflict ended in November 2020 in a Russia-brokered deal that saw Armenia cede chunks of territory it had occupied for decades. In January 2021, the leaders of the three countries agreed to develop economic ties and infrastructure for the benefit of the entire Caucasus region.

Russia expels 40 German diplomats

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday declared 40 German diplomats persona non grata in a retaliatory move, amid continued diplomatic fallout from the two-month-old war in Ukraine. "On April 25, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Russian Federation Geza Andreas von Geyr was summoned to the Russian Foreign Ministry," said a ministry statement on its website. Von Geyr "was strongly protested in connection with the openly unfriendly decision of the German government dated April 4, 2022 to declare 'persona non grata' 40 employees of Russian diplomatic institutions in Germany," it added. The ministry said the German move was motivated "by an absolutely false statement that the work of these employees was aimed at undermining the 'freedom of Germany' and 'unity of German society,' as well as insinuations regarding what is happening in Ukraine." — APP

Unregistered sugar dealers must be brought into tax net

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Monday directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to bring into the tax net the unregistered wholesalers, dealers or distributors of sugar to broaden the tax base. He observed that despite making huge monetary transactions and the availability of their data with FBR, these unregistered buyers of sugar largely remained outside the tax net and were evading the prime national responsibility of paying taxes. The president passed these directions while upholding a decision of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) directing the FBR to bring unregistered buyers of sugar in bulk into the tax net and reporting compliance within 90 days. As per details, the FTO had initiated an Own Motion investigation against the failure of FBR to bring into the tax net the unregistered buyers of sugar from M/s Naudero Sugar Mills (Pvt) Ltd. The FTO observed that non-NTN

holders had been buying huge quantity of sugar from sugar mills and their data was fully accessible by the FBR but this huge potential of tax collection remained unutilized. In its report, the FTO highlighted that during the last four years, sugar worth Rs 2.7 billion was supplied by the said mills to various unregistered buyers. Only three buyers held NTN, and FBR had not paid due attention to broadening the tax base. It further observed that this long hanging fruit had not yet been harvested and despite making huge monetary transactions, unregistered buyers of sugar remained outside the tax net. The FTO underscored that unregistered persons were easily identifiable because sugar mills were required to maintain records of supplies made during the tax period and issue tax invoices indicating names, addresses, description, quantity, values of goods,

CNIC or NTN of persons to whom the supplies were made under the Sales Tax Act of 1990. Based on these findings, the FTO had directed the Chief Commissioner, Large Taxpayers' Office, Karachi, to enforce compliance after obtaining data of unregistered persons from the sugar mills. FBR filed a representation with the president against this order of FTO. President Dr Arif Alvi disposed of the matter with the observations that FBR's field formations were not vigilant in collecting information related to unregistered buyers and were content with just whatever was being submitted in the monthly sales tax returns of mills. He regretted that the data of unregistered buyers was not being examined for the purpose of broadening the tax net. The president disposed of FBR's representation with the direction to submit a comprehensive implementation report to FTO within 60 days. — APP

APRIL 2022

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pl
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@PostIslamabad/ @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markez, Islamabad-Pakistan
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



Briefs
China launches rocket into near space

ISLAMABAD: A rocket was successfully launched from a space platform into 25 to 40 kilometer "near space" from Lenghu Town, Haixi Prefecture, northwest China's Qinghai Province.

The launch used a high altitude zero-pressure helium balloon as a space platform.

Through remote control to achieve aerial ignition and launch, the rocket can carry loads and undertake data collection, and achieve parachute landing after reaching a predetermined altitude, Ecn reported.

This is the world's first test launch of a sounding rocket from an aerostat. So far, only Stanford University has carried out a test on launching rockets based on a high-altitude balloon, but the balloon had a very low payload, and the rocket carried was very small. In this test launch, the rocket reached the expected flight altitude, and the data recovery was stable and successful, which made breakthroughs to atmospheric physics research and high-altitude detection methods. The launch was jointly conducted by the Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Chinese Academy of Science and Beijing Xingjian Tianhang space technology company. - Agencies

ADB commits \$3.23b for Pakistan in 2021

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) committed \$3.32 billion in 2021 to help Pakistan tackle the immediate effects of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and promote a green recovery. Financial and operational results published on Monday in ADB's Annual Report 2021 depict how ADB supported its developing member countries (DMCs) through a combination of finance, knowledge, and partnerships. The commitment made by the ADB in 2021 includes loans and guarantees, grants, equity investments, and technical assistance provided to governments and the private sector. In addition, ADB also mobilized \$2.019 billion in co-financing. According to the report, the ADB committed \$600 million for Pakistan's Integrated Social Protection Development Program and \$235 million for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Corridor Development Investment Program - Tranche 2. Similarly \$300 million were committed for Balakot Hydropower Development, \$372 million for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cities Improvement, and \$5 million were committed for Preparing Kurram Tangi Integrated Water Resources Development Project. The ADB also committed \$300 million concessional loan for Pakistan's Energy Sector Reforms and Financial Sustainability Program, and \$500 million concessional loan for COVID-19 Vaccine Support under the Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility. - APP

Twitter set to accept Musk's \$43b offer



WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Twitter Inc (TWTR.N) is poised to agree a sale to Elon Musk for around \$43 billion in cash, the price the CEO of Tesla has called his "best and final" offer for the social media company, people familiar with the matter said. Twitter may announce the \$54.20-per-share deal later on Monday once its board has met to recommend the transaction to Twitter shareholders, the sources said, adding it was still possible the deal could collapse at the last minute. Musk, the world's richest person according to Forbes, is negotiating to buy Twitter in a personal capacity and Tesla (TSLA.O) is not involved in the deal.

Twitter has not been able to secure so far a 'go-shop' provision under its agreement with Musk that would allow it to solicit other bids once the deal is signed, the sources said. Still, Twitter would be allowed to accept an offer from another party by paying Musk a break-up fee, the sources added.

Modi's visit a ploy to project fake normalcy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has rejected Indian Prime Minister's visit to Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) on Sunday terming it yet another ploy to project fake 'normalcy' in the territory. The Foreign Office Spokesperson in a press statement said that since 5 August 2019, the international community has witnessed many such desperate attempts by India to divert attention from the actual underlying issues in IOJK including Indian state-sponsored terrorism as well as widespread violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

It is not surprising, therefore, that while the Indian Prime Minister was on his brief visit to Jammu under a heavy security cover, the people of IOJK were observing a black day as an expression of their rejection of India's mischief and illegal policies, the statement said.

Pakistan also strongly condemns the laying of foundation stones for the construction of the Rattle and Kwar Hydroelec-

FO deplores India's 'public notice'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday deplored a so-called 'public notice' issued by India's higher education bodies urging its students not to pursue education in Pakistan, besides warning them of denial of employment. The University Grants Commission of India and the All India Council for Technical Education had jointly issued a public notice regarding the non-pursuance of higher education in Pakistan.

A Foreign Office statement said Pakistan strongly deplored the so-called public notice, advising students not to seek higher education in Pakistan and warning them of being denied employment in case they choose to do so. It termed the tone of the public notice not only threatening towards the students but also reeking tyrannical authoritarianism. "It is regrettable that

driven by its incurable obsession with Pakistan, the government of India is unabashedly coercing the students in order to deter them from pursuing quality education of their choice," it said. The FO said the contents of the public notice had further exposed the BJP-RSS combine's deep-seated ideological animus and chronic hostility towards Pakistan.

"It is deplorable that as part of its mission 'Hindu Rashtra,' the Indian government has resorted to such moves in order to stoke hyper-nationalism in the country," it said. The FO said the government had sought clarification from the Indian government with reference to the said public notice. "Pakistan reserves the right to take appropriate measures in response to this openly discriminatory and inexplicable action by India," it said. - APP

Hydroelectric Plant India has so far not fulfilled its Treaty obligation of sharing information with Pakistan. Pakistan views such laying of foundation stones of the two projects by the Indian Prime Minister as direct contravention of the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 and calls upon India to fulfill its obligations under the IWT and refrain from taking any such steps which are detrimental to the IWT framework, the MFAO added.

He said, It is a mockery that the BJP-RSS regime, which is relentlessly pursuing its avowed ideological mission to politically and economically disempower and dispossess the Kashmiris, seeks to project itself before the world as a champion of development in the occupied territory.

Pakistan salutes the Kashmiris as they remain undaunted in their determination to stand against India's oppressive occupation. Pakistan will continue to extend all possible support to the Kashmiris in their just struggle for the right to self-determination as pledged to them by the UN Security Council in its numerous resolutions, the statement added.

Iran hails latest talks with Saudi Arabia as 'positive'

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iran said on Monday that the latest round of talks with its regional rival Saudi Arabia was "positive and serious" and voiced hope for further progress soon.

Tehran and Riyadh, which severed diplomatic ties in 2016, held four rounds of talks in Iraq between April and September last year, with a fifth meeting last Thursday.

"The fifth round of negotiations between Iran and Saudi Arabia in Baghdad ... was positive and serious and saw progress," foreign ministry spokesman Saad Khatibzadeh told reporters.

Iran and Saudi Arabia support rival sides in several conflicts, including in Yemen, where Tehran backs the Houthi rebels and Riyadh leads a military coalition supporting the government.

In 2016, Iranian protesters attacked Saudi diplomatic missions in the Islamic republic after the kingdom executed revered Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr. Riyadh responded by cutting ties with Tehran.



ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan chairs a meeting of party leaders. - DNA

US panel says India religious freedom worsens

WASHINGTON: Religious freedom has deteriorated "significantly" in India under the Hindu nationalist government, a US commission said Monday as it again recommended targeted sanctions over abuses. It was the third straight year that the US Commission on International Religious Freedom asked that India be placed on a list of "countries of particular concern" - a recommendation that has angered New Delhi and is virtually certain to be dismissed by the State Department.

In an annual report, the panel - which is appointed to offer recommendations but does not set US policy - voiced wide concern about South Asia and also backed the State Department's inclusion of Pakistan on the blacklist. - Agencies

North Korea holds military parade to mark key anniversary

AGENCIES

Seoul: North Korea kicked off a much-anticipated military parade on Monday, a South Korean military source said, commemorating its major army holiday with a show of strength.

The nuclear-armed country stages military parades to mark important holidays and events that feature thousands of goose-stepping troops followed by a cavalcade of armoured vehicles and tanks and culminating with the key missiles Pyongyang wants to display.

Observers closely monitor these events for clues on North Korea's latest weapons development. Monday's parade to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Korean People's Revolutionary Army began at around 10 pm local time (1300 GMT) at the Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang, the source said.

It was widely expected to showcase the North's most sophisticated weaponry including the "monster" Hwasong-17 ICBM as well as hypersonic and submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

North Korea has held three nighttime military parades in recent years, with state media only reporting on the events the next day. As of Monday night, state media had not reported on the latest parade.

But specialist service NK News said at least a dozen "illuminated objects" were spotted over central Pyongyang late on Monday night in a possible indicator of a military parade or practice.

Pyeonggang has carried out more than a dozen weapons tests this year, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full range for the first time since 2017.

US and South Korean officials and analysts have also warned Pyongyang could resume nuclear weapons testing for the first time since 2017, citing renewed activity at its key testing site.

APNS felicitates Sharjeel Memon

DNA

KARACHI: The APNS has welcomed Mr Sharjeel Inam Memon on assuming the charge of Information Department as Minister Government of Sindh.

Mr Sarmad Ali President and Mrs Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society have congratulated Mr Sharjeel on appointment for the second term as Minister Information Sindh and hoped that under his stewardship, the Sindh Information would protect and safeguard the freedom of press and strengthen relations of the provincial government with the print media.

The APNS office bearers expressed their confidence that during the tenure of Mr Sharjeel Memon the interests of media will be safeguarded and actions will be taken for the development of print media in the province. They requested that the problems faced by Sindh based publications including payment of long outstanding dues and transparency in release of provincial govt ads be addressed on priority during his tenure.

Govt removes Zardari's name from ECL

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Co-chairman and former president Asif Ali Zardari's name on Monday removed from Exit Control List (ECL). Sources privy to the matter said that Mohsin Dawar's name was sent to the federal cabinet to be removed from ECL.

After the approval of the federal cabinet, the name of Mohsin Dawar will be removed through a circulation summary. It is also important to note that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had also invited Mohsin Dawar to attend Umrah.

China starts mass-testing in Beijing

WEB DESK

BEIJING: China's capital, Beijing, began mass testing of more than 3 million people on Monday to find COVID-19 cases and restricted residents in one part of the city to their compounds, sparking worries of a wider Shanghai-style lockdown. While only 70 cases have been found so far in the city of more than 21 million since a new outbreak surfaced on Friday, authorities have rolled out strict measures under China's "zero-COVID" policy to try to prevent a further spread of the virus.

Some residents worked from home and many stocked up on food as a safeguard against the possibility that they could be confined indoors, as has happened in multiple cities, including the financial hub of Shanghai. The city of Anyang in central China and Dandong on the border with North Korea also started lockdowns as the omicron variant spreads across the vast country. Shanghai, which has been locked down for more than two weeks, reported more than 19,000 new infections and 51 deaths in the latest 24-hour period, pushing its announced death toll from the ongoing outbreak to 138.

Long lines formed in supermarkets in central Beijing. Shoppers snapped up rice, noodles, vegetables and other food items, while store workers hastily restocked some empty shelves. State media issued reports saying supplies remained plentiful despite the buying surge.

Pakistani rupee punches US dollar after IMF deal

DNA

KARACHI: After the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to add \$2bn to the ongoing loan programme for Pakistan, the US dollar Monday lost Rs1.20 initially against the Pakistani rupee and at the closing time it reached Rs186.05 of the interbank trading.

The previous week saw a swift increase of US currency value as it closed at Rs186.70 against the Pakistani rupee. The Pakistani rupee saw a rise in value after the new coalition government was formed on April 11. But last week the Pakistani rupee was thrashed by the US dollar amid the rise in demand locally.

Now, on the first business day of the week, the Pakistani rupee finally bounced back with the US dollar losing value of Rs1.20 to reach Rs185.50. The economists termed the IMF deal progress wherein, the global Monterey body extended the loan programme for another year to prop up Pakistan's balance of payments position and foreign exchange reserves.

Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said on Sunday that Pakistan had asked the IMF to enhance its bailout package from the remaining \$3bn to \$5bn. Nathan Porter, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission Chief for Pakistan, issued the following statement: "We had very productive meetings with the Finance Minister of Pakistan Miftah Ismail over Pakistan's economic developments and policies under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) program."

Macron seeks to heal French divisions

NEWS DESK

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron faced the daunting challenge of uniting a deeply divided nation Monday after winning re-election in a battle against Marine Le Pen that saw the far right come its closest yet to taking power.

Centrist Macron won 58.54 percent of the vote in the second-round run-off compared with 41.46 for Le Pen, according to final results from the interior ministry.

Macron is the first French president in two decades to win a second term and his victory prompted a sigh of relief throughout Europe. But his victory over his far-right rival was narrower than their last face-off in 2017 when Macron won over 66 percent, and Le Pen's result was the best ever for the far right. The president already has an overflowing in-tray, ranging from preparing for parliamentary elections in June to implementing explosive pension reform plans and dealing with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Macron made no public appearance on Monday, staying in the secluded presidential retreat of La Lanterne next to the park of the Versailles Palace outside Paris to plot his future political strategy.

"The difficulties are going to start real soon," Brice Teinturier, managing director at public opinion specialists Ipsos France, told AFP.

Addressing supporters late Sunday, Macron vowed to heal rifts in a deeply divided country, vowing a response to the "an-

PM felicitates Macron



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday felicitated French President Emmanuel Macron on his re-election. Centrist Macron won 58.54 percent of the vote in the second-round run-off compared with 41.46 for Le Pen,

according to final results from the interior ministry. Macron is the first French president in two decades to win a second term and his victory prompted a sigh of relief throughout Europe.

On his Twitter account, PM Shehbaz wrote: "I look forward to working together in building a stronger multifaceted Pakistan-France relationship."

percent of people who voted either delivered a blank ballot or spoiled their papers. We need to respond to the angry and worried messages from millions of French people who say 'I can't make ends meet'."

Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said Monday. The 44-year-old president now faces parliamentary elections in June, where keeping a majority will be critical for his ambitions. "Macron's biggest challenge will be to create a sense of cohesion in an extremely fragmented country," said Tara Varma, senior policy fellow and head of the Paris office of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

French daily Le Monde called Macron's win "an evening of victory without a triumph", while left-leaning Liberation said it was "a victory without the glory".

Conservative daily Le Figaro said Macron's win was "no mean feat", but also asked: "Who can possibly believe that it is rooted in popular support?" Within the next two weeks, Macron is expected to reshuffle his government, with the departure of Prime Minister Jean Castex a near certainty, and several other ministers also being replaced.

"Many in government are exhausted and he needs new blood," said one Elysee official, asking not to be named, will aim for gender parity in his next cabinet and has said he would like to see a woman become his next prime minister. For Le Pen, her third defeat in a presidential poll was a bitter pill after years of effort at making herself electable. But she made clear that she retained political ambition. Sunday Le Pen, 53, said she would "never abandon" the French and declared that she had scored a "brilliant victory" in her defeat to Macron.