



Islamabad POST

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Malaysia a gateway to ASEAN for Pak

Detailed News On Page-08

French Open Iga Swiatek beats Tsurenko

Detailed News On Page-06



Ready to face long march Govt decides to finish term

The government has also decided to take tough decisions in a bid to steer the country out of an economic crisis

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: After much deliberation, the coalition partners have decided that the government will go ahead with the completion of its term instead of early elections in the country. The govt allies also vowed to face the long march announced by the PTI Chairman. The sources said the government has also decided to take tough decisions in a bid to steer the country out of an economic crisis. As Finance Minister Miftah Ismail has left for Doha, Qatar, for talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the tough measures will reportedly be taken in a couple of days. The decision comes after a meeting of the heads of the ruling alliance for consultations amid pressure from the PTI to announce early elections. The allied parties' heads met last night to discuss the unstable political situation in the country after the announcement of a long march towards Islamabad by PTI Chairman Imran

Fawad warns govt against using force

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: PTI Senior Vice President Fawad Chaudhry Monday warned the government against using force to stop the "Azadi March" as the party prepares to head to Islamabad to seek early elections and send the coalition government packing. In a press conference flanked by party leaders, the former information minister told the government that it could arrest PTI leaders and workers if it wanted, but it would not be in its favour. PTI Chairman Imran Khan had announced yesterday that his party's much-anticipated Islamabad long march would begin on May 25 and

Continued on Page 06

Khan. The government is reportedly considering accommodating PTI for the long march if the party intends to hold a rally and go back. However, if PTI plans to stage a sit-in and try to paralyse the system, the government will turn towards legal options to stop it, the sources said. On Sunday, Imran Khan announced an Azadi March to Islamabad on May 25 to seek an election date and dissolution of the National Assembly. He asked the military to adhere to its promise of "neutrality". The government is in a fix as Pakistan's economic situation gets worse due to rising fears that the country might go bankrupt if the International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout programme is not revived. The Fund has demanded the government remove subsidies on petroleum products which is likely to increase inflation and the ruling parties are having parleys on the matter because it has a high political cost.

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ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Marriyam Aurangzeb, High Commissioner of South Africa, Dean of African Group Mohammad Karmoune Ambassador of Morocco and others cutting cake to celebrate South African day. - DNA

NIH issues monkeypox alert

All the big private and government hospitals are directed to establish isolation wards

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In light of monkeypox cases spreading across Europe, the United States, and the United Kingdom, Pakistan's top health body Monday issued an alert regarding the virus. The federal and provincial health officials are put on high alert and instructions are issued to monitor passengers at airports and other entrances, a National Institute of Health (NIH) notification said. The body further said that all the big private and government hospitals are directed to establish isolation wards. It also advised the medical staff at the hospitals to be careful around monkeypox patients.

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Bilawal's visit significant: Chinese MOFA

During the talks, the two sides agreed that friendship between Pakistan and China was rock solid

BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin on Monday said Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's maiden official visit had further demonstrated the new Pakistani Government's commitment to developing all-weather bilateral strategic partnership. "I would like to stress here that Foreign Minister Bilawal has made China destination of his first official bilateral visit after assuming the office. This further demonstrates that the new Pakistani Government is committed to developing our all weather strategic cooperative partnership. China appreciates it," he said during his regular briefing. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto paid a two-day visit to China at the invitation of Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and held fruitful talk in a very cordial and friendly atmosphere in Guangzhou, capital city of Guangdong province. The spokesperson said during the talks, the two sides agreed that friendship between



Pakistan and China was rock solid, and solidarity and cooperation between the two nations had become an important source of stability in a turbulent world. Both sides agreed that the terrorist attack targeting Chinese citizens in Pakistan was unacceptable and such despicable attempts to undermine

Continued on Page 06

Turkey wants concrete steps

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan criticized NATO allies for failing to take action to address Turkey's security concerns. Speaking at a ceremony for the domestically developed Hızir Reis and Selman Reis submarines in Gölcük, Kocaeli, the president said Ankara expects its NATO allies to take concrete steps to address its security concerns rather than making ineffectual statements.

CJP among most influential people

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial on Monday was named among the top 100 most influential people of 2022, the list released by Times Magazine showed. - DNA

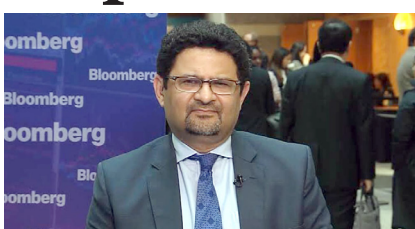
Govt decides to seal red zone

Tabling his demands, the PTI chairman said, "We are demanding the date of fresh elections and dissolution of the assembly. We want fair and free elections in the country"

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Federal government has decided to seal the PTI long march towards Islamabad. In a move to fail the PTI's long march, the PML-N-led federal government has decided to seal the coming and outgoing ways towards Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Meanwhile, containers are also being shifted to the federal capital's Red Zone. It is expected that the Red Zone will be sealed by tonight to ensure entry denial to the PTI workers and supporters. On Sunday, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan announced to hold Islamabad long march on May 25. Imran Khan addressed an important press conference after chairing the party's core committee session to finalise the strategy and date of Islamabad's long march. Tabling his demands, the PTI chairman said, "We are demanding the date of fresh elections and dissolution of the assembly. We want fair and free elections in the country. Our style of politics is peace and our public gatherings are attended by people from all walks of life and women."

No hike in petroleum prices



NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail has once again said the government doesn't plan to increase the prices of petroleum products. However, the minister hinted at an increase in the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) interest rate.

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New US envoy arrives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Donald Blome began his assignment at the United States Embassy in Islamabad on Monday. Ambassador Blome will lead the United States Mission in Pakistan in its ongoing efforts to deepen connections between the Pakistani and American people and work with the government of Pakistan towards a more stable, secure, and prosperous future for Pakistan. Ambassador Blome brings a wealth of experience and expertise to this shared effort and to the US Mission in Pakistan.

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Biden vows to defend Taiwan in apparent US policy shift

The US president began by directly linking the China-Taiwan situation to Russia's invasion of Ukraine



NEWS DESK

TOKYO: US President Joe Biden has warned China is "flirting with danger" over Taiwan, and vowed to intervene militarily to protect the island if it is attacked. Speaking in Japan, he appeared to contradict long-standing US policy in the region, although the White House insisted there had been no departure. Mr Biden drew a parallel between Taiwan and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, prompting an angry rebuke from Beijing. He is on his first tour of Asia as US president, visiting regional allies. Mr Biden prefaced his

'No room for compromise' on Taiwan

AGENCIES

BEIJING: Upping the ante following comments by US President Joe Biden on Taiwan, China on Monday ruled out compromise and vowed to take "resolute actions to safeguard its sovereignty and security interests." "On issues related to China's sovereignty and territorial integrity, China has no room for

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remarks saying US policy toward Taiwan "has not changed". But his comments in Tokyo are the second time in recent months he has unequivocally stated the US would defend Taiwan if China attacked, in what has been seen as a change in tone. The US has previously been vague on what it would do in such a situation. Mr Biden was answering questions in Tokyo during a press conference with Japanese PM Fumio Kishida, when a journalist asked them about the defence of Taiwan. The US president began by directly linking the China-Taiwan situation to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. If there was a rapprochement eventually between Ukraine and Russia, and sanctions were not sustained,

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Pak Korea FTA should be settled soon: Sohail Nisar

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: H.E Suh Sangpyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, while expressing his desire to boost bilateral trade relations with Pakistan, urged the business community of both countries to find new avenues for trade in each other's countries. In this regard, the Embassy will fully support the conduct of B2B meetings.

Korean Envoy, while addressing a meeting of Pakistan-Korea Business Council of FPCCI held at a local hotel in Karachi, describing Pakistan's energy and IT sectors as attractive for joint ventures and foreign investment, said that Korean investors have a keen interest in Pakistan's energy and information technology sectors.

H.E Kim Haksung, Consul General of South Korea, directors and members of business council Abid Nisar, Hassan Sohail, Hilal Afridi, Sohail Usman, Iftikhar Ashraf, Muzammil Sohail, Shahzad Aslam, Salim Godil, Babar Khan, Naveed Mazhar were also attended the meeting.

"Taking advantage of Korea's expertise in energy sector, Pakistan can easily overcome the energy crisis and export its IT services to put its economy on the path to rapid growth", envoy said, also appreciating the efforts of Sohail Nisar, Chairman Pak-Korea Business Council FPCCI for promoting bilateral trade between the two countries.

Sohail Nisar, Chairman, Pakistan-Korea Business Council of FPCCI for 12 consecutive years, said that Korea, the world's ninth largest economy, is a reliable and strong partner of Pakistan. Korea wants to invest at least 1 billion dollars in Pakistan. If both sides make efforts according to their real potential to boost bilateral trade, the economies of Pakistan and Korea will not only reap tremendous benefits. "Korea wants to set up about 50 small scale units and joint ventures with Pakistan, also interested in joint ventures in electric motorbikes, rickshaws and cars", Chairman of Pakistan-Korea Business Council said, adding that in addition, Korea wants to import 300-400 million worth of IT services from Pakistan, which will boost Pakistan's exports.

Sohail Nisar urged to ink FTA between Pakistan and Korea PFY, DTY Chapter 5402-4700, 5402-3300 and other items as per promised. "Korea has a market of 20,000 tons of fruits, and due to our efforts the government allowed mango exports to Korea, so the government should facilitate the export of mangoes and allow traders to export also, while vegetables, frozen fruits also have great demand in Korea".

Chairman, Pakistan-Korea Business Council requested Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Finance Minister Miftah Ismail to form a high level trade delegation to visit Korea to review business opportunities and discuss issues of mutual interest with the Korean Prime Minister, businessmen and investors. Similarly, a meeting of Pakistani businessmen with a Korean Envoy should also be arranged in Islamabad for a detailed discussion on joint ventures. Sohail asked the Finance Minister Miftah Ismail to reduce the 5% withholding tax levied on the Indenting Commission to 1%, as a result of which huge remittances would come to Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Head of Public Policy for South Asia, Meta (the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, Whatsapp and Messenger) Sarim Aziz called on Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar at the Ministry of Law and Justice. – APP

Secy Health urges media to play role against polio

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Secretary Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Tahir Orakzai, has urged media and parents to play their role in ensuring vaccination to all eligible children in every campaign saying that polio eradication is a matter of our children and national pride and needs collective efforts by all stakeholders. He said this while inaugurating May round of anti-polio drive here Monday at Police Services Hospital. Coordinator Emergency Operations Center Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr Ijaz Shah, Technical Focal

Person EOC, Dr Imtiaz Ali Shah, Team Lead N Stop Dr Hazif were also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Secretary Health Tahir Orakzai said that May round of anti-polio drive is of critical importance given the reporting of three cases from North Waziristan and presence of virus in the environment. He said that special plan has been chalked out for the southern KP and government was taking every measure to address ground challenges in coordination with all the line departments adding that polio eradication is our national responsibility and is a matter of our children's health that needs serious and concerted efforts by all stakeholders.

Secretary Health informed that during the May campaign over 7.28 million eligible children will be vaccinated against polio for which a total of 30981 teams have been established out of which 27763 are mobile teams, 1908 fixed teams, 1161 transit and 149 roaming teams. He said that adequate measures have been taken to ensure security to the teams and over 40 thousand law enforcement agencies (LEAs) personal will be deployed in the May campaign at various plugging points and with teams.



MBS receives phone call from COAS Bajwa

NEWS DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman has received a phone call from Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa. During the call, the Chief of the Pakistani Army was reassured about the health of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. HRH the Crown Prince expressed thanks to General Qamar Bajwa for his sincere feelings. During the call, they reviewed cooperation relations between the two countries in the military field.

FCCI welcomes withdrawal of 17% GST

DNA

FAISALABAD: Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has welcomed the withdrawal of 17% GST on the import of solar panels and hoped that it would not only help in containing load shedding of electricity but also convince masses to switch over to the environment friendly renewable energy resources.

Prosecution department team visits FCCI office

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) will give much needed awareness about one of the most important and integral parts of the criminal justice system i.e. prosecution, said Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh President FCCI. He was talking to a team of the prosecution department that visited FCCI under the leadership of District Public Prosecutor Muzaffar Ali Ranjha. Senior



Vice President FCCI Mr. Imran Mahmood Sheikh was also present in addition to Mr. Zeeshan-ur-Rasool, Mr. Riaz Sunpal Deputy District Public Prosecutors, Chaudhary Adnan Akbar, Qaisar Manzoor and Faheem Ahmad. Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh

underlined the importance of the prosecution department in dispensation of justice to the needy and deprived segments of the society. He said that people without paying hefty fees to the lawyers could protect their legitimate legal rights.

Respect for state institutions is vital

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Respect for the state and state institutions is paramount. These views were expressed by PML-Q Deputy Secretary Information Khawaja Rameez Hassan in a press release regarding the ongoing political chaos in the country. He said that development and stability in any country is not possible without rule of law and constitution. The country is currently in the throes of an economic crisis for which all political forces desperately need to tackle challenges at the expense of political interests. He said that if there is a state then there will be politics. Anti-national forces are conspiring day by day to weaken Pakistan.

Marri envisions a Pak safe for minorities

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister, Shazia Marri, while delivering a speech at the conference arranged by the National Commission for Human Rights, has said that the word minority is not discriminatory, but in fact the mindset is discriminatory and he mindset needs to change as people need to realize that minority somewhere is a majority elsewhere. The Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri, was invited by the National Commission for Human Rights on a conference on Unequal Citizens: Ending Systemic Discrimination against Minorities, held at a local hotel.

The Minister lauded the work being carried out by the commission regarding protection of Minority Rights. She stated that provision of rights to minorities is a priority of the government and specially the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). She informed the audience that 11th August was declared as Minority Day by the then President, Asif Ali Zardari. She briefed the audience that the constitution of Pakistan calls for equality of law for all, and no discrimination. The preamble of the constitution is to safeguard minority rights, she added. She further stated that the National Action Plan calls for co-existence. It was the PPP which gave 5% quota to minorities

in 2009. Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) is a universal program which works with a dynamic NSER survey for efficiently include the deserving minorities into the social protection program. Shazia Marri, concluded by stating that the government would diligently work to protect the minority rights and facilitate them to the fullest. Other dignitaries attending the conference called against discrimination, derogatory remarks being faced by the minorities. They stated that the founder of Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared Pakistan a state where all religions will have equal rights, irrespective of their beliefs.

OGDCL sets up free eye camp at Chaknaurang

DNA

CHAKWAL: OGDCL under its CSR Program established 03 days Free Surgical Eye Camp at OGDCL CSR Dispensary situated in Chak Naurang & School Screening at various locations in Chak Naurang and surroundings was conducted from 18 th to 21st May 2022 in collaboration with Al-Shifa Eye Trust Hospital. In this regard an impressive opening ceremony was arranged at OGDCL CSR Dispensary District Chakwal on 19.05.2022 and Addl. Deputy Commissioner (F&P), Chakwal Mr. Mujahid Abbas inaugurated the eye camp as Chief Guest. Mr. Iqbal Khan Field Manager, Col. Tariq Usman, General Manager-Al Shifa Eye Trust and Sr. CSR

officer Mr. Muhammad Shujah ur Rehman participated in the inaugural ceremony.

Addl. Deputy Commissioner visited the Eye Camp and enquired about the health of patients whose surgery had been done, the patients showed their complete satisfaction about the overall process. Thereafter, the ADC visited the Operation Theater established at OGDCL CSR Dispensary by the Expert Team / Doctors of Al-Shifa Eye Trust and witnessed the live operation / laser Procedure going on.

It is further informed to the team that all the expenses incurred at three days Eye Camp including Laser / Phaco Surgery, provision of glasses and medicines will be borne



by OGDCL under its CSR program. According to the data available, 897 patients were screened, 801 were provided medicines, 695 provided with glasses and cataract surgery was conducted over 121 patients.

In addition to that 1441 Children were also screened in different schools, performed 166 COVID tests, 133 Lab Screening, 185 special glasses were issued to the needy people and 50 patients were referred to Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, Rawalpindi for further investigation and treatment. Addl. Deputy Commissioner Mr. Mujahid Abbas appreciated OGDCL efforts under CSR Initiative for the under privilege community of Chak Naurang village

DC Ali posted as addl secy

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad Mr. Ali Shahzad has been transferred and posted as Additional Secretary Co-ordination Services and General Administration Department while Lieutenant (Retired) Sohail

Ashraf Director General Punjab Land Record Authority will replace him. Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has acknowledged the services rendered by Mr. Ali Shahzad and welcomed the new incumbent Mr. Sohail Ashraf.

Media conclave reviews CSR projects under CPEC

"The inhabitants of Gwadar deserve respect and development according to their rightful demands"

DNA

GWADAR: The initiatives in the domain of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) undertaken by China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC) and other Chinese firms in Gwadar are appreciable and are aimed at the right direction, however, effective development communication and positive engagement with local communities is critical for the effectiveness and long-term success of these projects. All stakeholders should devise a mechanism for an integrated socio-economic development strategy and ensure inclusion of the hopes and aspiration of the inhabitants of Gwadar vis-vis CPEC.

This was the crux of a two-day media conclave and roundtable conference titled 'CSR Initiatives in Gwadar (The Gateway to CPEC)' co-organized by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad and the University of Gwadar in collaboration with COPHC, Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) in the strategic port town. Speaking on the occasion, Naseer Khan Kashani, chairman, Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) stressed the

importance of bringing the locals together through CSR. "We must prioritize people over infrastructure development. Drinkable water and electricity is the top priority of the authorities in Gwadar", he stated.

Kashani said a desalination plant of about 1.2 million gallons would become operational in six to eight months that would provide drinkable water for the locals. Moreover, the newly inaugurated state-

of-art Pak-China Vocational & Technical Training Institute will provide three years' training to local youth, which is a big contribution by our Chinese friends, he added. "Chinese authorities have also recently provided 3,000 solar panels to the poorest of the poor in Gwadar for the provision of electricity," he informed. While delivering the keynote speech, Zhang Baozhong, Chairman COPHC spoke at length about the experiences of his seven-year stay in Gwadar. "We are cognizant of the fact that Gwadar deserves more rapid development to live up to the expectations of the local people. There is no denying the fact that it has developed much during the past seven years", he remarked.

He stated three reasons for the promising prospects of Gwadar: the cooperation of the Gwadar people, its vast resources, and its strategic location. "The inhabitants of Gwadar deserve respect and development according to their rightful demands", Mr. Baozhong underscored. "We are sending 20 students to China on scholarships every year. We have been running a primary school here for the last five years and soon we will construct a secondary school as well.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

May 03 / Poland	National Day
May 06 / Bulgaria	Armed Forces Day
May 06 / UAE	Armed Forces Day
May 07 / Kazakhstan	Armed Forces Day
May 08 / Czech Republic	National Day
May 09 / European Union	National Day
May 17 / Norway	Constitution Day
May 21 / Hungary	Armed Forces Day
May 22 / Yemen Republic	Re-unification Day (National Day)
May 24 / Eritrea	National Day
May 25 / Lebanon	Liberation and Resistance Day
May 25 / Argentina	National Day
May 25 / Jordan	Independence Day
May 28 / Azerbaijan	Republic Day
May 28 / Ethiopia	National Day
May 31 / Brunei	Armed Forces Day



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ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal inaugurates Seerat Center at HEC. – DNA

President AJK invites traders to capitalize potentials in AJK

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry, President, Azad Jammu & Kashmir said that the region has huge potential for JVs and investment in many sectors of its economy including hydropower generation, precious stones, gems & jewellery and tourism and invited the business community of Islamabad to capitalize on these opportunities for achieving lucrative outcomes while AJK government would fully facilitate them. He said that Azad Kashmir has the potential to generate 9000 MW hydroelectricity that would end loadshedding in Pakistan and benefit its businesses & industries and urged that the private sector of Pakistan should exploit this potential by setting up small hydropower projects in the region. He said this while addressing the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Ministers and Secretaries of Industries & Energy AJK also accompanied him at the occasion. Barrister Sultan Mehmood said that economic power determined the political power of a country and emphasized that making Pakistan a strong economy should be the



paramount priority of the rulers. He said that an economically strong Pakistan would also be a source of strength for the people of Indian Occupied Kashmir. He briefed the business community about his efforts to raise the Kashmir cause at international forums for the right of self-determination of Kashmiri people. He also condemned the conviction of Kashmir leader Yasin Malik by an Indian court.

Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the business community of Islamabad was keen to explore opportunities of business and investment in Azad Kashmir and stressed that AJK Board of Investment should facilitate them such efforts. He said that the AJK government should offer attractive incentives

to ICCI members for JVs and investment in Azad Kashmir that would help the economy of the region to grow fast and create more jobs for youth. He presented a resolution to strongly condemn the conviction of veteran Kashmiri freedom fighter Yasin Malik by an Indian court, which was unanimously passed by the business community.

Khalid Iqbal Malik Chairman Founder Group said that the Pakistani nation was standing with the people of Indian held Kashmir in their just struggle for right of self-determination and urged that India should settle this burning issue in light of the UN Security Council's resolutions. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, former Presidents ICCI Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Mian Akram Farid, Zafar Bakhtawari, Zahid Maqbool, former Senior Vice President Fatma Azim, Ch. Javed Iqbal, Nasira Ali and others also spoke at the occasion and proposed the constitution of a joint committee comprising representatives of AJK government and ICCI to facilitate the business community in exploring business and investment opportunities in Azad Kashmir.

China announces scholarships for professionals

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Water Resources and the Ministry of Education, China have jointly implemented the "Chinese Government Scholarship on Senior Water Conservancy Professionals" to select government officials across the world responsible for water conservancy policy to pursue their master's degree in China at Hohai University. Under the Scholarships program, the government officials from project management and river basin planning and governance, young experts in water engineering related fields from scientific research institutions and engineers of water conservancy enterprises would also be selected to pursue their master's degree in China at Hohai University. According to official sources from Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan, in that regard, the China's Hohai University has announced May 25, 2022 (Wednesday) as deadline to apply for Master's Program of senior water conservancy. The University informed that more than 100 candidates from Belt and Road countries have learned advanced experience and technologies in China's water resources management, water conservancy project construction, and other fields, and have participated in extensive cultural exchange activities. In 2022, the Program will provide 20 scholarships dedicated to the applicants from the member states of UNESCO Intergovernmental Hydrological Program (IHP), especially those from the Belt and Road countries, African countries, and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). – APP

President asks State Life to pay money to widows

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has asked the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLICP) to pay the Group Insurance claims to the widows of firemen of the Fire Brigade Department, Metropolitan Corporation, Multan, who had died in service. "It's saddening that insurance payments to poor widows are not carried out and it is shameful that they had to wait for 8-10 years", said the President while upholding the decision of the Wafaqi Mohtasib ordering SLICP to pay Group Insurance to the widows of the firemen, take disciplinary action against officials under relevant laws, and report compliance within 30 days. As per details, the complainants namely Mst Mukhtar Mai, Mst Nooran Mai, Mst Nasim Mai and Mst Azra Bibi had claimed that their husbands were employed as Firemen at the Fire Brigade Department, Metropolitan Corporation, Multan, who died during service. Being widows, they applied to the

SLICP (the Agency) for the payment of the Group Insurance death claims but to no avail. Feeling aggrieved, they approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib who passed the orders to grant them the insurance claims. Afterwards, SLICP challenged the decision of the Mohtasib by filing a representation with the President against the decision. The Agency contended that the complainants were not entitled to the payment of insurance as the employees of the Metropolitan Corporation, Multan were not insured with SLICP and no premium on their behalf had ever been received. The complainants, on the other hand, asserted that the deduction of Group Insurance amount was done regularly on monthly basis from the pay of their deceased husbands as regular employees of the Corporation, and hence, were entitled to the payment of insurance amount. The perusal of the record showed that a Group Insurance Contract was executed between the Governor of Punjab through the Secretary, Local Government and Community Development Depart-

ment, Government of Punjab and the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan. It provided that employees of all Local Governments in Punjab, including the Metropolitan Corporations, were covered under the contract, provided they paid the premium. After the perusal of the facts, the President rejected the representation of the SLICP and observed that the deceased firemen were regular employees of the Metropolitan Corporation, Multan and had paid monthly premiums according to their basic pay scales during their service. He further noted that the complainants had also provided all the required documents to SLICP, therefore, the position of the insurance company was fallacious, unfounded, unjustified and thus, not acceptable. The President termed the denial of payment to widows as "perverse and unjustified" and an act of maladministration on behalf of SLICP and directed that the agency was bound to pay the Group Insurance claims to the complainants under the contract.

Mashal appeals Pak govt for a legal assistant

ISLAMABAD: Mashal Malik, wife of Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik Monday appealed Pakistani government for a strong legal assistant to raise the matter of Yasin Malik in the International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court and other United Nation forums. All Hurriyat leadership in Indian occupied Kashmir is being deliberately eliminated, she feared while speaking to PTV news channel. Yasin Malik is being judicially assassinated, the world and human right international organizations should urgently help in the release of Yasin Malik, she demanded. She explained that Narendra Modi-led fascist Indian government had arrested thousands of Kashmiris including Hurriyat leaders and activists before and after its illegal move of repealing the special status of Jammu and Kashmir on August 05, 2019 and lodged them in different jails of occupied Kashmir and India. She said that Yasin Malik was a political prisoner and India was taking unconstitutional steps to illegally remove the leaders of Kashmir freedom movement, adding, international community should put more pressure on India to immediately release Yasin Malik from all "baseless" charges against him. She also lamented that the brutal treatment meted out to Yasin Malik despite his chronic multiple ailments which had resulted in a steep decline of his poor health. – APP

Media conclave reviews development under CPEC

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a two-day media conclave and roundtable conference appreciated the role undertaken by Chinese companies working in Gwadar in the domain of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). However, they highlighted the importance of effective development communication and positive engagement with local communities for the effectiveness and long-term success of these projects. The conclave titled "CSR Initiatives in Gwadar (The Gateway to CPEC)," was jointly organized by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad and the University of Gwadar in collaboration with China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC), Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) in the strategic port town. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman, Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), Naseer Khan Kashani stressed the importance of bringing the locals together through CSR. "We must prioritize people over infrastructure development. Drinkable water and electricity is the top priority of the authorities in Gwadar", he stated. Kashani said a desalination plant of about 1.2 million gallons would become operational in six to eight months that would provide drinkable water for the locals. – APP

Nationwide anti-polio drive starts

ISLAMABAD: The government has launched a week-long nationwide polio immunization campaign on Monday to immunize over 43 million children under five years of age. According to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Health, over 339,521 trained and dedicated polio workers have been engaged in the vaccination drive to vaccinate children at their doorstep. He said that previous drives were limited to some areas but this campaign will be launched in all areas of the country. In a message, Minister for Health Qadir Patel said "Government of Pakistan remains committed to eradicating polio and focusing on well-coordinated efforts at both the federal and provincial level to realize the dream of making Pakistan a polio-free country." He stressed the important role of parents and caregivers in the success of repeated vaccination campaigns. – APP

PTDC, WB organize workshop on NTCI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and The World Bank (WB) jointly organized a workshop in Islamabad on National Tourism Competitiveness Index (NTCI) for Pakistan. The workshop was attended by relevant federal and provincial stakeholders, private sector, industry experts and the academia, said a press release. Tourism remains a priority sector for the government and is identified as one of the key drivers of economic growth. It is estimated that investments in travel and tourism sector can generate over half a million new (direct and induced) jobs over the next five years across the country. Pakistan currently ranks 121st out of 140 economies in the 2019 'International Tourism Competitiveness Index' (ITCI) of the World Economic Forum (WEF). Going forward, the country aspires to improve its ranking considering the strides that Pakistan's tourism industry has taken in recent years to improve tourism infrastructure and connectivity, tourist safety and overall hospitality in line with industry standards. There has been renewed interest by the international investors in Pakistan's Tourism and Hospitality sector due to the uptick in domestic tourism accompanied by improvements in regulatory and policy framework. In order for the country to develop and manage destinations, preserve its heritage and promote responsible tourism,



the center and provinces need to partner with academia and private sector. Meanwhile, establishment of NTCI and an action plan for achieving the NTCI indicators could contribute positively towards improvement in Pakistan's ranking on the ITCI. The work on NTCI's development has so far involved consultations with the relevant public and private sector entities and the workshop presented the proposed NTCI framework to the participants.

The participants also discussed the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders to ensure the implementation of NTCI and associated action plan. Speaking on the occasion, Managing Director PTDC, Aftab Ur Rehman Rana reaffirmed government's commitment towards enhancement of sustainable tourism development and said, "PTDC's collaboration with the WB on developing NTCI will allow the government to collect, monitor and report valuable data, which will strengthen the tour-

ism sector's ability to show evidence backed progress while enabling the authorities to make informed policy decisions". Talking about the activity, Ms. Kiran Afzal, Senior Private Sector Specialist of the WB said, "World Bank's partnership with the government on this crucial activity will help realise our collective vision of making Pakistan a destination of choice for tourists from around the world while offering diverse tourism experiences to the domestic travelers". – APP

Briefs

'PTI's narrative limited to social media

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N senior leader Mohsin Nawaz Ranjha Monday said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's narrative was purely based on lies and it is only limited to social media platforms to mislead the nation. Talking to a private news channel, he said that the coalition government would move towards elections only after introducing electoral reforms and they had full confidence for their victory in general elections. He further said that PTI leadership cannot hide the truth by hurling blackmailing tactics adding he said PTI only wanted to create anarchy in the country. Replying to a question, he said that the government was not afraid of threat for long march call by Imran Khan, adding, no one will be allowed to take the law into their hands and peaceful protest is everyone's right. - APP

'Collective global action must to reverse biodiversity loss'

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Sunday said the damage done to precious biodiversity would not reverse itself rather the world would have to take collective global action to preserve the nature. In a tweet on her official Twitter handle, the minister wrote, "On International Day for Biological Diversity, let us remember what the theme for this year tells us: 'Building a Shared Future for All Life' reminds us that we are all connected to each other. It is time to offset the damage we have done to nature in all its splendid diversity". She mentioned that according to the United Nations three quarters of the Earth's land-based environment and about 66% of the marine environment have been altered by a century of extractive human activity. "This damage will not reverse itself. We will have to take collective global action", she said. Her tweet was followed by the hashtag #BiodiversityDay. - APP

PM reappoints Dr Saeed Akhtar as PKLI chairman

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday reappointed Dr Saeed Akhtar as Chairman of Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute (PKLI) besides reviving the board. The prime minister took the decision in line of the meeting of the PKLI Board of Governors, which he had presided over the previous day. Dr Saeed Akhtar has been recalled from the USA and re-appointed as chairman PKLI, the PM Office said. Four years ago, Dr Saeed Akhtar proceeded back to the United States after court proceedings and other issues. Inspired by the vision of Shehbaz Sharif, Dr Saeed Akhtar had left behind everything in America and had come to Pakistan. The previous government subjected the project to political vendetta, the PM Office said. - APP

NSFC, PSF call for proposals

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) and National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) have called for proposals to initiate joint Scientific Exchange Program in those research priority areas that are aligned with the national strategies of both countries. According to official sources, the call is open between 14.04.2022 and 16.06.2022 in which National Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) and Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF), has invited HEC Chartered Universities, Research Centers and Institutes to submit joint proposals for Scientific Exchange Program. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Former MP European Parliament Sajjad Karim interacts with the senior journalists during his recent visit to Islamabad. Mr. Karim briefed the Pakistani media about the recent developments taking place in the UK vis a vis Brexit. He also talked about Pakistan, UK relations in details. - DNA

100 students graduated from US English works program

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Ray Castillo attended the graduation ceremony for 100 English Works! students at National University of Modern Languages (NUML) on May 18. The U.S. English Works! Program provides a foundation of English language and vocational skills to deserving youth, aged 17-25. The six-month, 240-hour program boosts English proficiency, develops computer literacy skills, and builds job market knowledge for motivated students who have limited financial resources. Since its beginning in 2015, over 3,700 youth have graduated with marketable skills that lead to greater employability.

The classes for this cohort were conducted fully online because of the pandemic, and the students succeeded in adding 21st Century skills, leadership skills, and entrepreneurship skills to their proficiency set.



Their teachers also successfully passed the Google Certified Educator Level 1 exam and learned the Canvas learning management system to better cater to the needs of these students. "Our successful collaboration results in

a better skilled workforce in this community," stated the U.S. Embassy Minister Counselor for Public Affairs Ray Castillo in thanking National University of Modern Languages Director General Brigadier Syed Nadir Ali and the NUML teachers and management team for their support of this U.S. initiative. "This year, the United States and Pakistan are celebrating 75 years of friendship. We are collaborating closely on many significant projects, and you are the continuation of this relationship," added Minister Counselor Castillo.

The graduates of this program become part of the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network (PUAN), the largest alumni network in the world. Through PUAN, these graduates can network, apply for small grants, and cascade their knowledge through community service outreach. Currently, there are 1,300 youth in Pakistan attending English Works! classes, and additional student groups will be added in the fall.

8 died, 26 injured in a bus accident

NATHIAGALI: At least eight tourists died and 26 others were injured when a coaster plunged into a deep gorge after a collision with a bus at Khaira Gali. Rescue 1122 Abbottabad and Murree during a joint operation recovered the dead bodies and injured. According to the Rescue 1122 sources, 7 injured declared critical at Civil Hospital Murree were referred and shifted to Rawalpindi for treatment. The tourist coaster was heading towards Rawalpindi from Nathiagali when it collided with a bus resulting in the coaster's fall into a deep gorge where five tourists died on the spot and 26 others including children and

women sustained injuries. Abbottabad control room after receiving the accident information dispatched three ambulances of Rescue 1122 along with the medical team to the accident spot. The rescue teams recovered 26 injured including women and children and 5 dead bodies from the gorge. Rescue Abbottabad team shifted 22 injured including women to Civil Hospital Murree, while 4 persons were provided medical aid on the spot. Rescue Abbottabad also rescued two dead bodies while Rescue Murree rescued 3 dead bodies and shifted them to Murree Civil Hospital. - APP

APHC to observe shutdown in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has called for complete shutdown on Tuesday (May 24) against the conviction of illegally detained Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik in a false case by a court of India's notorious National Investigation Agency (NIA). According to Kashmir Media Service, call for the shutdown was fully supported by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, traders, civil society, students and other Hurriyat

leaders and organizations. The APHC spokesman in a statement strongly condemned the conviction of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik on concocted and politically motivated charges and appealed to the international community, the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to play their role in saving the life of illegally detained Kashmiri pro-freedom leader and getting him released from Indian prison. - APP

Govt taking all possible steps to eradicate polio

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Health Services (NHS) Abdul Qadir Patel said on Monday that government was taking all possible measures to make Pakistan polio-free and appealed the parents to cooperate with polio teams and secure future of their children by allowing them drops of anti-polio vaccine. Talking to a private news channel, he said that five-day national polio eradication drive kicked off on Monday, where approximately 43.3 million children under the age of five years would be administered anti-polio vaccine. He said that the government has chalked out a comprehensive national emergency programme against polio, which was being carried out across the country in collaboration with the provinces.

Around 340,000 frontline workers will take part in the campaign to administer anti-polio vaccine to the children at their doorsteps, he added. On the strict directions of PM Shehbaz Sharif federal, provincial governments and district management to address the challenge of persistently missed children, refusals and fake finger marking during the campaign, he mentioned. He said that the challenge of polio still existed in the country, however, there was dire need for all stakeholders to work collectively to eradicate the menace from the country. - APP



ISLAMABAD: German Ambassador to Pakistan Bernhard Schlagheck calls on Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman. - DNA

IRSA releases 168001 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 168001 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 156810 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1084.55 feet, which was 34.55 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded a 31991 and 34082 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 70317, 108814 and 50070 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River, a total of 29600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 26319 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP

USC to hold 'E-Khuli Kachehry' on May 26

ISLAMABAD: Managing Director (MD), Utility Store Corporation (USC), Syed Taha Aziz Magrabi will hold a "E-Khuli Kachehry" on May 26 (Thursday). According to USC statement, The Kachehry will be held from 11:00 hours to 13:00 hours, the USC has requested the public to contact on 051-111 123 570 for resolving their issues and complaints. The Kachehry would also broadcast live on Facebook. - APP

Online streaming all set to air another Chinese Hit

ISLAMABAD: Starring famous actors Wang Yu Wen & Wang Zi Qi, 'Tapmad' (On demand video streaming platform) has released the trailer of a Chinese Rom-com (dubbed), which will hit the screens on May 27 this year. Titled as 'Once We Get Married', the drama is an adaptation from a web novel, which will be aired in Urdu with the title of 'Shadi Hojanay Do'. While taking it to the social media, the online streaming channel dropped the trailer of the show along with its release date, setting a big treat for 'Binge Watchers'. "Don't forget to watch 'Shadi Hojanay Do' (Once We Get Married), May 27 on 5 PM." "It's a story of two opposite personalities", they further added while sharing a glimpse of the interesting story plot, which is all set to unfold. This new show will be another package of non-stop entertainment for all the viewers of OTT platform who can enjoy it this summer. - APP

AIIOU starts dispatching books

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIIOU) has completed the process of admissions in matriculation, FA, and BA programs offered in spring 2022 semester. Thousands of students enrolled themselves in these programs. According to mailing officer, Zulfiqar Ali Bokhari, books of matric programs have been dispatched to students, while others enrolled in FA will receive books by the end of this week and then we will dispatch books to students who took admission in BA (Associate Degree) program. As per the directions of VC, AIIOU, Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum and digital transformation policy of AIIOU, university has provided soft copies of these books are online on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). Provision of online books from matriculation to PhD level is further reflective of VC's vision which has eliminated complaints of delayed mailing of books. Therefore, students are instructed to download books from the website and start working on their assignments and preparing for their final examination.

Sino-Pak scholars proposed CPEC DTC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chinese and Pakistani scholars have proposed setting up a CPEC Digital Transformation Center (DTC), Gwadar Pro reported on Monday quoting a study published in the journal Frontiers in Psychology. Researchers from Xi'an Jiao Tong University, Xi'an, China, University of Peshawar, Islamia College University, Peshawar, and Chinese University of Political Science and Law, Beijing, China, concluded in the study that Pakistan needs to transform CPEC digitalization by setting up CPEC Digitalization and Transformation Center (DTC) at the CPECA office to attract more investors and businesses. Pakistan can take advantage of CPEC funding, and Chinese and foreign investments by transparently managing through ICT applications in government, private, and public-private partnerships initiatives, the study stated.

Pakistan's regional exports increase 19.79%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries witnessed an increase of 19.79 percent in first ten months of fiscal year (2021-22), as compared to the corresponding period 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 \$3823.817 million, which is 14.24 percent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$26852.131 million during July-April (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 42.72 percent to \$2342.526 million in ten months of this year from \$1641.283 million during last year while exports to Bangladesh also increased by 44.87 percent to \$720.854 million from \$497.556 million. The country's export to Afghanistan however dropped by 47.36 percent to \$436.180 million this year from \$828.746 million whereas exports to India also dipped by 52.26 percent to \$1.075 million from \$2.252. Similarly, exports to Sri Lanka rose by 46.61 percent to \$312.400 million from \$213.076 million in the previous year whereas exports to Nepal also increased by 26.19 percent to \$5.063 million from \$4.012 million, in addition exports to Maldives increased by 15.65 percent to \$5.719 million from \$4.945 million, it added. On the other hand, the imports from seven regional countries were recorded at \$14807.033 million during the period under review as compared to \$10753.722 million during last year, showing increase of 37.69 percent. - APP

Delay in starting the Orange Line

The Abdul Sattar Edhi Orange Line project has been in the process of completion for many years. Surprisingly, the Orange Line Corridor consists of only 3.88 km which was to be completed by the Sindh government. The current project starts from the Town Municipal Administration Office, Orangi Town and ends at Jinnah University for Women, Nazimabad.

The bus service will be used by families residing in Orangi, Banaras Town, North Nazimabad and adjoining areas. According to the Sindh government, 97% of the work has been completed. Buses have also been imported from China, but the installation of ITS system and training of drivers is underway. Minister for Transport and Mass Transit and Information Sharjeel Inam Memon has given good news to the citizens of Karachi that the Orange Line will be launched soon. An estimated 50,000 people will use the facility daily. The Sindh government has also issued orders to connect the Orange Line with the Green Line. Sindh Infrastructure Development Company has started work on the design for the integration of the two routes.

After that Orange Line buses will take passengers to Nagan Chowranghi. Transport is a big problem in Karachi. At least six projects of mass transit were to be started but the second project is also delayed. Other projects are not mentioned yet. Karachi is one of the ten largest cities in the world in terms of population but lags behind many other cities in South Asia in terms of facilities. There is a need to provide all modern facilities to this economic hub of Pakistan so that it can play a more active role in the economic development of the country.

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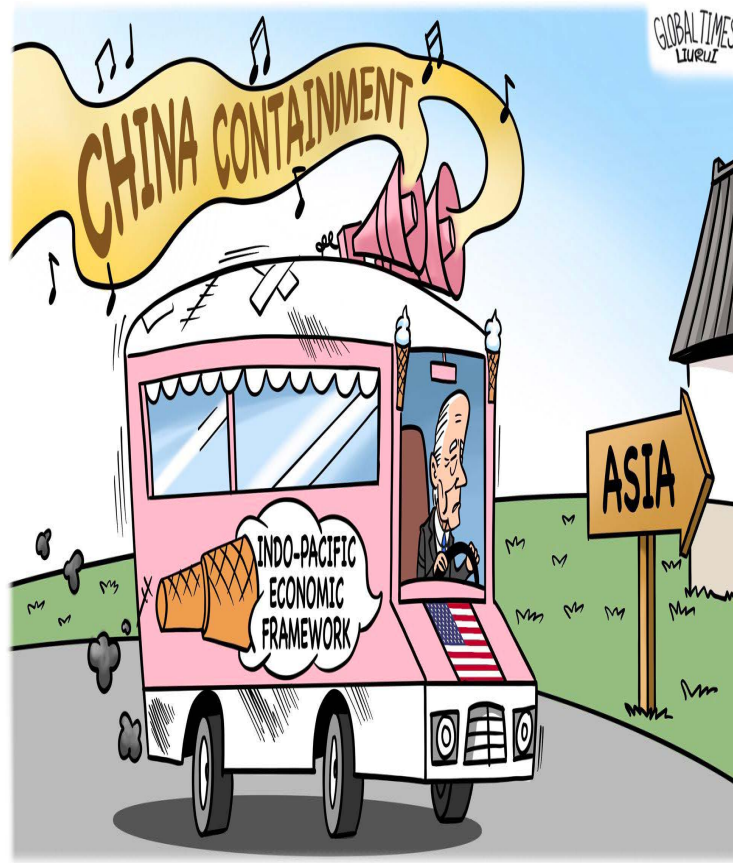
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Growing political tensions in country

It is important to end the growing political tension in the country. No country can travel to economic prosperity in the face of political instability. There is a need to stop leaders from both the government and the opposition who are fueling this political temperature. Political tensions have escalated with the PTI chairman announcing a long march on the 25th.

In any case, the coalition government has announced that it will fulfill its constitutional term and has indicated that it will not accept any unconstitutional demands of the PTI. In a situation where the PTI is going to march towards Islamabad with the demand for early elections, it seems that this will create a more complicated situation. The country's senior political leaders must play their part in easing this ongoing tension as Pakistan's economy is currently unable to withstand any political catastrophe.

If this atmosphere of tension is not removed, the loss will not be of any one political party but of the entire country. Which may take a long time to resolve. The survival of the political and democratic system lies in the fact that the political leadership pursues political issues with patience and forbearance and not promotes a culture of intolerance. The clear color of this culture of intolerance of the political leadership is also beginning to show in our society which will lead to our social degradation.

China and Iran are expanding military cooperation

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



In January 2021, Beijing sources confirmed that Iran and Pakistan had gained access to China's BeiDou satellite navigation system for military purposes. Although current Iranian ballistic missiles rely on guidance methods rather than satellites, BeiDou can help the Iranian armed forces determine launch locations and target positions, especially with intelligence support and other strategies. In contrast, satellite navigation is suitable for controlling surface-to-surface ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and drones within a range of 500 km

Chinese minister of national defense Wei Fenghe visited Tehran in April 27, 2022 and met with high profile personalities of Iran. Wei Fenghe expressed that Iran sees China as a Strategic partner.

countries "agreed to enhance bilateral cooperation in joint military exercises, exchange of strategies, training matters and other common areas." Due to Baqeri's strong defense diplomacy, Iran's relations with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA)

The close cooperation of both the countries would provide security particularly in the current critical and tense situation. The intentions of both the countries demonstrate that their cooperation may lead towards deep strategic cooperation. After meeting with President Ebrahim Reiss, the two sides agreed to expand all areas of cooperation, including the military, while reiterating their shared commitment to protecting fundamental interests, which they called the West's "unilateral, domination and external intervention." Admittedly, it emphasizes mutual inattention. United States. After meeting with AFGS, the two

have become closer in recent years. In 2019, Baqeri became the first Iranian armed forces chief of staff to visit China since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. In addition, Wei Feng's visit was the third high-level PLA delegation to visit Iran since 2016, which coincided with Baqeri's appointment as head of state. It shows that there is more going on below the surface. China has reaffirmed its commitment to peace and security in the Middle East and the Gulf. At the same time, he criticized the United States for imposing unilateral sanctions on Iran and proposed a series of forgotten alternative security frameworks for the Gulf, which undermined the US-led security umbrella in the region. It may ensure the prosperity of Beijing and the free flow of oil. China has been considered suspicious of arms supply to Iran during the sanctions and it also has been cautious with Iran over the UN arms embargo, which was in effect until October 2020. Once sanctions lift, private and state-owned companies may seek to diversify their portfolios by selling military assets. China was the largest supplier of weapons to both sides during Iran-Iraq war, they bought more than 7.75 billion Arms in the late 1980s. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, China took advantage of a flaw in pre-2006 orders to continue supplying weapons to Iran after the years of sanctions. These weapons were anti-ship missiles, surface-to-air missiles; armored personnel carriers, surface-to-air missile systems, air search radar and missile launch catamarans systems reached Iran. Strengthen the denial of disproportionate territory. In recent years, Iran has used its control over

this strategic barrier of Strait of Hormuz, through which is one-fifth of the world's oil passes, to attack passing tankers and shoot down US drones. For their own reasons, China and Iran are trying to develop A2 / AD capabilities on their shores to counter US and allied navies. Both countries practice drowning American aircraft carriers in make-ups. He has also helped develop long-range anti-ship missiles, demonstrating how Chinese companies can boost Iran's development of indigenous weapons. In March 2010, it was reported that Iran had begun manufacturing Chinese-designed Nasr-1 anti-ship missiles. Just four years ago, during the 2006 Lebanon war, four Israeli navy soldiers were killed by an Iranian derivative of a Chinese C-802 subsonic anti-ship cruise missile launched by the Iranian proxy Hezbollah. Since the lifting of sanctions in 2020, bilateral arms purchases have not been reported, possibly due to Tehran's economic woes and possible backlash from Iran's rivals (especially through US Executive Order 13949). But Iran's defense industry is showing interest in Chinese weapons, especially fighter jets. The possibility of future deployment of Chinese J-10 fighter jets in the Persian Gulf was raised by former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and there is no question of a jet trade for energy. With the possibility of a resumption of the nuclear deal, may allow Tehran to gain greater access to funds could lead to a growing concern for the arms trade with Washington and its allies. Some analysts have ruled out the possibility of China becoming a major arms exporter to Iran in the post-sanctions

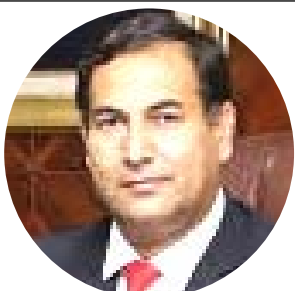
period, but as the Lebanon war and recent bombings have made clear, Chinese technology is in the wrong hands. Drones, dual-use and missile technology are also of concern. Unlike other major arms suppliers in the region, China is not a party to the Wassenaar Agreement, which could make it the largest supplier of armed drones in the Middle East Region.

Because Iran can manufacture its drones locally, Tehran's opponents currently use Chinese drones exclusively. Reports have revealed Chinese support for the local production of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in the Gulf States, including a recent joint venture between China and Saudi Arabia to develop military drones in the kingdom. Given China's high-quality, low-cost drones, as well as its ability to transfer knowledge and upgrade Iranian UAVs, the possibility of bilateral cooperation in this emerging field cannot be ruled out. In January 2021, Beijing sources confirmed that Iran and Pakistan had gained access to China's BeiDou satellite navigation system for military purposes.

During the recent years, both the country have increased their military cooperation with their navies visiting each other's seaports and organized joint naval drilling in the Indian Ocean. In March 2021, China Iran has signed a 25-years strategic cooperation agreement. It also covers all variety of cooperation and economic activities from oil and mining to establishment of industries in Iran. The improvement of strategic and defense cooperation between China and Iran would have a remarkable impact in diffusing unilateralism and fighting terrorism in the region.

Green desert techniques and Cholistan

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Suleman Tahir



In the Moroccan city of Ouarzazate, the government is using wastewater for irrigation after its proper treatment, which is helping to green the drylands or deserts in the region. The Sahara Forest Project is using solar panels and wind turbines to help with their water issues

Pakistan is facing severe challenges due to global climate change which is a serious threat to the well-being and prosperity of the people. Already Pakistan is facing recurring heat waves, droughts, riverine & flash floods, landslides, and sea storms or cyclones. Due to global climate change, the frequency of such events has increased and a significant increase

tween 32 and 192 Km. The human and livestock population in the desert is 0.1 and 2.0 million, respectively. The mainland use in the area is livestock rearing. Agricultural farming is not practiced due to the unavailability of irrigation water and low rainfall. More than 81% of the desert is under small and big sand dunes, while 19% consists of alluvial flats and sand hummocks. The area is affected by severe desertification due

to poor vegetation cover, severe wind erosion and very severe soil salinity. In the summer season temperatures raised to 48 °C and sometimes rise over 50 °C during periods of drought. Water is collected seasonally in a system of natural pools called Toba, or man-made pools call Kund. Subsoil water is found at a depth of 30-40 meters but is typically brackish, and unsuitable for most plant growth. Desert greening is the process of man-made reclamation of deserts for ecological reasons, farming and forestry, but also for reclamation of natural water systems and other ecological systems that support life. Desert greening has the potential to help solve global water, energy, and food crises. Desert greening is more or less a function of water availability. Water can be made available through saving, reuse, rainwater harvesting, desalination and wastewater treatment. A novel type of desalination is done with the Sahara Forest Project. This project uses solar stills for the generation of freshwater. Another novel technique is cloud seeding, either by artificial means or through the action of cloud-seeding bacteria that live on vegetation. In the Moroccan city of Ouarzazate, the government is using wastewater for irrigation after its proper treatment, which is helping to green the drylands or deserts in the region. The Sahara Forest Project is using solar panels and wind turbines to help with their water issues. Large-scale solar

and wind farm research has shown that such strategies can significantly change the climatic conditions around those farms. These farms can increase the heat and humidity in their vicinity which is good for plant growth. Solar and wind farms can also drive an increase in rainfall, as was seen in Sahel in the Sahara desert, Africa. One way to make the desert soil fertile is by adding pyrogenic carbon. Pyrogenic carbon is nothing but the product of incompletely burnt organic matter. Examples of pyrogenic carbon include charcoal, black carbon, and soot. Recent research has shown that adding sources of pyrogenic carbon is a way to regenerate degraded and infertile soils, bringing them back to fertility. The plants that are used in desert greening projects are often those that love salt. This means that these plants can grow in conditions with high salt concentrations in the water. If the land is being used for agriculture, sustainable farming practices need to be employed. Crop rotation, permaculture, hydroponics, etc., are all key to keeping the soil viable over the long term. In addition to farming practices, intelligent landscaping can drastically reduce or prevent soil erosion, allowing fertile topsoil to remain in place. Similarly, conservation of the Cholistan ecosystem is important both for the present needs and future challenges. In Pakistan, animal origin protein (meat, milk and eggs) is deficient. Despite many problems, there

are also good opportunities for the development of livestock production in the Cholistan. Indigenous livestock breeds can be used by smallholders as a tool against poverty. By using modern techniques, it is possible to revolutionize livestock farming in the Cholistan. By using modern green desert or agriculture techniques, it is possible to convert and use desert land for Agri farming and forestry. It will bring more food in terms of crops and livestock. Government must look into the matter and allocate funds for the development of Cholistan. It would bring positive outcomes if the government engage the nearest universities like Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan with the Cholistan development authority because universities are the center of modern knowledge and have the potential to quickly adapt and implement new technology. With suitable investment, concrete government policies, desert greening techniques and modern Agri technology, it is possible to convert Cholistan into a food basket for the rest of the country. It would result in less import of the food items, will reduce import bills and will create positive effects on Pakistan's economy.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Suleman is the Tahir Vice Chancellor Khwaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology, Rahim Yar Khan

Briefs

Govt decides to finish term

FROM PAGE 01
The Shehbaz Sharif government has stated that it needs support from "all sides" to take tough decisions in order to revive the economy. The federal capital is rife with rumours that in case the required support was not assured in a couple of days, the NA may be dissolved and snap elections will be announced. In the first round of talks held last week, PPP supremo Asif Zardari met PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and other PML-N ministers.

Fawad warns govt..

FROM PAGE 01
he will meet his workers and supporters at 3pm at the Srinagar Highway. The PTI chairman also told the workers that he would be leading the march from Khyber Pakhtunkwa to Islamabad himself. Laying out the plan for the march in his presser today, Chaudhry said Khan would leave Peshawar in the morning on May 25 and while leading a rally from the KP capital, he would reach Islamabad on the same day. He noted that the call to march towards Islamabad was restricted to people in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkwa, while workers in Karachi would hold protests in their city. The ex-information minister also said that the PTI chairman would also announce the next action plan on June 3, indicating that the march could extend. The PTI leader further told the government that it could not stop "hundreds of thousands of people" from marching to Islamabad. "Women, children, ex-servicemen, doctors, and bureaucrats will be part of our march. Retired generals will also be part of our long march," claimed Fawad.

No hike in petroleum...

FROM PAGE 01
Speaking during a media talk at the Karachi airport on Monday, Miftah said that former finance minister Shaukat Tarin had promised the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that the then government will not offer subsidies on petroleum products, instead, it will impose Rs30 tax per litre. He said this promise was made over a written agreement. Miftah said that the subsidy on fuel has to be abolished and tax of Rs30 per litre has to be levied as per the promise made by Imran Khan and Tarin. "We have to pay the price of the promises made by the former government," he lamented, adding that the government will have to increase the price of diesel by Rs150 following the formula of Imran and Tarin.

'No room for...

FROM PAGE 01
compromise," Wang Wenbin, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, told a news conference in Beijing. "No one should underestimate the determination of Chinese people," he added, expressing strong dissatisfaction in response to Biden's remarks. Earlier on Monday, Biden told a news conference in Japan that Washington would intervene militarily if China uses force to take over Taiwan. "Our policy towards Taiwan has not changed at all. We remain committed to peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait to ensure that there is no unilateral change in the status quo," Biden said at a joint news conference with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo. Responding to a question about whether the US would get involved militarily in Taiwan if China uses force to take over the island, Biden replied: "Yes." "That is the commitment we made," Biden added. However, Beijing asked Washington to "earnestly abide" by the One-China principle and three joint communiques it signed with China. "China will take resolute actions to safeguard its sovereignty and security interests," Wang said, adding: "And we will do what we said," according to the Chinese daily Global Times.

PCB announces 16-player squad for West Indies ODIs

The three ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League One-Day Internationals against the West Indies are scheduled at the Pindi Cricket Stadium on 8, 10 and 12 June

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Monday named the 16-member squad for the three ODI matches against West Indies, starting from 8th June at the Pindi Cricket Stadium Rawalpindi.

As the series will not be played in a Managed Event Environment, the selectors have decided to reduce the 21-player squad for the home Australia ODIs to 16 players and those left out of the squad from next month's matches are Asif Afridi, Asif Ali, Haider Ali and Usman Qadir. Saud Shakeel was not considered as he is scheduled to undergo a surgery for sinusitis. The three ICC Men's Cricket World Cup Super League One-Day Internationals against the West Indies are scheduled at the Pindi

Cricket Stadium on 8, 10 and 12 June. Babar Azam will continue to lead the side, while Shadab Khan, who missed the Australia ODIs due to an injury, has returned as vice-captain.

The squad will assemble in Rawalpindi on 1 June for a training camp and also they further establish themselves in the T20 format. Wasim said, adding that I hope this bunch will continue the form they gained from the Australia series. "Also, and taking into consideration that there will be no Managed Event Environment and the players can be

against the West Indies are part of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 qualification and we have decided to give best chance to our side to collect maximum points and strengthen our chances of progressing directly for

the 50-over tournament. "We have retained the same core of players as we they further establish themselves in the T20 format." Wasim said, adding that I hope this bunch will continue the form they gained from the Australia series. "Also, and taking into consideration that there will be no Managed Event Environment and the players can be

called at a short notice, we have reduced the squad size to 16 players. "For the Australia ODIs, we had also announced backup players as cover to those players who were carrying injuries. Players such as Mohammad Nawaz and Shadab Khan are now fully fit, which has allowed us to leave out Asif Afridi and Usman Qadir. "However, Usman along with Asif Ali and Haider Ali remain in our plans for the shortest format as we have a series of T20I lined up this year, including the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022."

The squad includes three openers in Abdullah

Shafique, Fakhar Zaman and Imam-ul-Haq, three



Khushdil Shah, two wicket-keeper/batters in Mohammad Haris and Mohammad Rizwan, two spin all-rounders Mohammad Nawaz and Shadab Khan with Zahid Mahmood as a wrist spin-

ner and five fast bowlers in Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Mohammad Wasim Junior, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Shahnawaz Dahani.

Pakistan boasts three batters inside the top-15 of ICC player rankings with Babar sitting on top of the tree, followed by third-ranked Imam-ul-Haq and 12th-ranked Fakhar Zaman. Amongst the bowlers, Shaheen Shah Afridi is the highest-ranked player in seventh position.

Pakistan squad for West Indies ODIs: Babar Azam (captain), Shadab Khan (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imam-ul-Haq, Khushdil Shah, Mohammad Haris (wicketkeeper/batter), Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Rizwan (wicketkeeper/batter), Mohammad Wasim Junior, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shahnawaz Dahani and Zahid Mahmood.

Pakistan scores match saving goal against India



DNA

JAKARTA: Rana Abdul Waheed scored a match-saving last-minute goal against India as Pakistan ended their first match in a 1-1 draw in Asia Cup 2022. Pakistan managed to make

the most of the last penalty corner with Waheed netting the ball, dodging the Indian goalkeeper by a few inches. The goal gave relief to the Pakistani camp after they had a tough time on the field throughout. Starting off, India scored an early goal in just the ninth

minute of the match. Their 20-year-old debutant Karti Selvam netted the ball to give an early lead to India who then didn't allow Pakistan to take many chances. However, the Green Shirts missed four straight chances to shatter their confidence. In a nail-biting

finish, Pakistan launched back-to-back attacks in the twilight phase of the game which finally gave them a breakthrough just a minute to go in the match. Green shirts will next play against Indonesia on May 24 followed by their match against Japan on May 26.

Palestine an open wound: Qatar's Emir

DNA

DAVOS: The emir of Qatar has urged the international community to give as much attention to resolving the forgotten and ignored conflicts in the world, stressing in particular the Israel-Palestine conflict, as it has to the war in Ukraine. Addressing business leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on Monday, Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani said that while "laser focus" is rightly applied to finding a diplomatic solution to the Ukrainian crisis, help and solidarity should be given to victims of "every race, nationality and religion". "The most glaring example is in Palestine, which has been an open wound since the establishment of the United Nations," he said. "Those families have been occupied for decades with no relief in sight. The escalation in illegal settlement aggression has been relentless and the same goes for the continued attacks against the Palestinian people." "I keep praying that the world wakes up to the injustice and violence and finally acts," he said. He mentioned the case of Shireen Abu Akleh, the veteran Palestinian-American Al Jazeera correspondent who was killed by Israeli forces earlier this month in the occupied West Bank. "Her death was just as horrific as the seven journalists killed in Ukraine since March of this year, and the 18 other journalists killed in Palestine since 2000, and many other journalists killed in the line of duty in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen," the emir said. He said there should be no tolerance of attacks on journalists, and urged those in attendance to not accept a world where governments have double standards regarding the value of people based on their religion, region or race. "We consider the value of each European life to be just as precious as someone from our region," he said. Sheikh Tamim pointed out that the Davos forum is of "exceptional importance" as it is held amid economic challenges and geopolitical turmoil. "Before we can hope for economic prosperity, we must first examine, repair and enforce our framework for peace," he said.

Manchester City retain Premier League title after an epic comeback

WEB DSEK

MANCHESTER: Manchester City marked an exceptional comeback in their match against Aston Villa on the final day of the season to win their fourth Premier League title in the last four years. The home side of City took the field with a point advantage and a better goal difference by six over the second-placed Liverpool and soon experienced a scare in the form of Aston Villa's brilliant start. The home side, however, held their nerves calm and kept their title hunt on the line by moving from 2-0 down to win 3-2 against Aston Villa. It was not just the Aston Villa, whom the City had to tackle to lift the trophy but they had to keep an eye on the Liverpool-Wolves clash at the Anfield. The reigning world champions started their day with some early good news Pedro Neto put Wolves 1-0 up against Liverpool. The joy, however, was short-lived as Sadio Mane struck for the home side.

Salah and Son share Premier League Golden Boot

LONDON: Mohamed Salah and Son Heung-min shared the Premier League Golden Boot on Sunday after both forwards scored on the final day of the season. South Korea's Son netted twice in Tottenham's 5-0 win at Norwich to move to 23 goals - one clear of Salah, but the Egypt forward struck late in Liverpool's 3-1 win at home to Wolves. Manchester United's Cristiano Ronaldo finished third with 18 goals in his first season back in the Premier League. Salah's goal was ultimately in vain as Jurgen Klopp's team finished one point behind Manchester City, who scored three goals in five minutes to beat Aston Villa 3-2. Tottenham's net secured a fourth-place finish, meaning they qualify for next season's Champions League. Son, 29, said it was "incredible" to have the award. "I can't believe it," he told the BBC. "I got really emotional. I dreamed of it as a child. Literally it's my in hands. I can't believe it. "Until my goal I was really frustrated that I missed big chances. I told the players I missed the easiest chances and scored one of the toughest ones.

"I didn't give up. I wanted to score today. The team helped me a lot at half-time. They wanted to help me, you could see it today." Spurs manager Antonio Conte was delighted to see club and individual ambitions realised with the rout of the Canaries at Carrow Road. "This was our target," he told the BBC. "First to get in the Champions League but then when there was a chance to help Sonny reach the top scorer, we enjoyed it," the Italian added. "I have seen his team-mates try to help him. The award is for Son but it's for the whole team. They helped him reach this big achievement." - Agencies



Iga Swiatek beats Tsurenko as Osaka loses

The power and accuracy of her groundstrokes, plus near-impenetrable defensive skills, have proved too good for her opponents, with Tsurenko the latest to be swatted aside

SPORT DESK

PARIS: World number one Iga Swiatek underlined why she is the overwhelming favourite for the French Open with a rapid first-round win over Lesia Tsurenko. Poland's Swiatek showed all her quality in a 6-2 6-0 victory that took just 54 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier. The 20-year-old, who won Roland Garros in 2020, extended her winning streak to 29 matches by beating the Ukrainian. Defending champion Barbora Krejickova and four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka were knocked out. Czech second seed Krejickova, who has been sidelined this year with an elbow injury, looked like she was heading for a straightforward win

before French 19-year-old Diane Parry fought back to triumph 1-6 6-2 6-3 in front of a delighted home crowd on Chatrier. Japanese former world number one Osaka was beaten 7-5 6-4 by Amanda Anisimova in a high quality encounter. American Anisimova, who reached the French Open semi-finals in 2019, will face Croatia's Donna Vekic in round two. "I know the streak will come day stop" Few women have begun a Grand Slam with the odds stacked as heavily in their favour as Swiatek does

in Paris. Since a run to the Australian Open semi-finals in January, she has dominated the women's game and won her past five tournaments. She claimed titles in Doha and Indian Wells, then became world number one following Australian Ashleigh Barty's shock retirement in March. A few days later

The power and accuracy of her groundstrokes, plus near-impenetrable defensive skills, have proved too good for her opponents, with Tsurenko the latest to be swatted aside. "It was a pretty good match for me," said Swiatek, who has won 42 of her past 43 sets. "I just want to keep going. I know the streak will come day

stop but I'm just focusing on my game and not the numbers." Swiatek will face American Alison Riske or Ukraine's Dayana Yastremska in the second round. Osaka, who struggled with an Achilles injury in the build-up to the tournament, served eight double faults as she was let down by her serve. She said she was worried about the reception she would receive on her return to Paris after withdrawing from last year's event because of mental health struggles. Both she and Anisimova were warmly received by the crowd on Suzanne Lenglen, with the fans rallying behind Osaka as she fought

to keep Anisimova at bay. Anisimova then produced a near-flawless service game to take the opening set with a forehand winner. She dealt with pressure from Osaka in the second set, breaking on a double fault and saving three break points in the next game to keep a 5-3 lead. Anisimova created three match points on her serve and looked shaky as she sent two into the net, before a winner down the line wrapped up victory. Elsewhere, 2020 semi-finalist Petra Kvitova advanced with a 7-6 (7-0) 6-1 win over Hungary's Anna Bondar. Former US Open champion Bianca Andreescu came within three points of defeat before rallying to beat Germany's Ysaline Bonaventure 3-6 7-5 6-0.

Bilawal's visit significant: Chinese MOFA

FROM PAGE 01

China-Pakistan friendship would not succeed, he added. Wang Wenbing said the two sides believed cooperation between the two countries enjoyed fruitful results. "We will deepen our development strategy coordination to release the potential for cooperation and advance China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) development," he added. He appreciated Pakistan's support for the China-proposed Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI). "We stand ready to work together to focus on developments, deal with security challenges and advance implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and build a community with a shared future for mankind," he added. He called on all sides to abide by the principle of mutual respect, equality and win-win cooperation, and oppose cold war mentality and zero-sum game and bloc confrontation. "State Councilor Wang pointed out the two countries are true friends and good brothers and friendship was cultivated by generations of leadership and is as relevant as ever," he added.

"We will continue to put Pakistan as a priority in our neighbourhood diplomacy and consolidate our friends and make sure our relationship become a strong stability force in the region and provide more impetus to regional development and revitalization," he said. - APP

Biden vows to defend...

FROM PAGE 01

"then what does this signal to China about the cost of attempting to take Taiwan by force?" he asked. "They are already flirting with danger right now by flying so close and all the manoeuvres that they are undertaking," Mr Biden said, referring to increasing reports of Chinese warplane incursions into Taiwan's self-declared air defence zone. Chinese military aircraft regularly fly into Taiwan's self-declared air defence zone. He added that while "my expectation is that it [a Chinese invasion] will not happen, it will not be attempted", at the same time it depended on "how strong the world makes clear that that kind of action is going to result in long term disapproval". He was then asked directly if the US would defend Taiwan militarily if China invaded, when it has not done so in the invasion of Ukraine, and he responded: "Yes... that's the commitment we made."

NIH issues monkeypox alert

FROM PAGE 01

There are 92 confirmed cases of the virus in different countries and 28 are suspected cases in the world, the notification said, adding the virus transmits from one animal to another and is now transmitting to humans also. The NIH said that the virus spread via physical contact with the infected person. The World Health Organisation (WHO) said it expects to identify more cases of monkeypox as it expands surveillance in countries where the disease is not typically found. As of Saturday, 92 confirmed cases and 28 suspected cases of monkeypox have been reported from 12 member states that are not endemic to the virus, the UN agency said, adding it will provide further guidance and recommendations in the coming days for countries on how to mitigate the spread of monkeypox.

New US envoy arrives

FROM PAGE 01

On his arrival, Ambassador Blome said, "I am thrilled to be in Pakistan. I look forward to exploring this beautiful country and acquainting myself with its people and its culture. Most importantly, in this 75th year of US-Pakistan relations, I will continue to build on the strong relationship between our countries."

Briefs

Oman, Iran sign trade deals during president visit

FOREIGN DESK

MUSCAT: Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi arrived in Oman on Monday as the two countries signed a string of trade deals and international talks on Tehran's nuclear programme hang in the balance, leaving the Islamic republic under sanctions. Raisi, on his second Gulf visit since taking office in August, was greeted by Sultan Haitham bin Tareq at the airport and received a 21-gun salute at the royal palace, an Omani statement said.

Raisi's one-day trip comes at a time when renewed talks on restoring a 2015 nuclear deal are at a stalemate. Oman played a mediating role between Tehran and Washington in the build-up to the original agreement. The countries signed 12 memorandums of understanding during the visit, including in the fields of oil and gas, transport, education, trade and investment, reported the official Oman News Agency.

"Trade exchanges between the two countries of Oman and Iran will improve definitely," Raisi said before departure, according to Iran's state news agency IRNA. "Both countries are determined to upgrade the level of political and economic ties," he added. A delegation of 50 Iranian businessmen travelled to Oman last week, IRNA said, adding that Iran's minister for roads and urban development has announced plans for a joint shipping line and tourist flights.

Belgium imposes quarantine on monkeypox patients

BRUSSELS: Belgium on Monday required people diagnosed with monkeypox to observe a three-week quarantine, health authorities announced. People showing symptoms of monkeypox must immediately go to a hospital's emergency room, according to the guidelines of the Risk Assessment Group, a council of health authorities representing the federal government and regions. Patients must self-isolate for 21 days if they are diagnosed with the disease, said to the guidelines, stopping short of a quarantine for close contacts. Four cases of monkeypox have been diagnosed so far in Belgium, with all related to a festival that took place earlier this month in the city of Antwerp.

Since the beginning of May, several monkeypox cases have been detected in the UK, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Sweden, and France, as well as Canada, Australia, and the US. Monkeypox is a virus transmitted to humans from animals, with symptoms including fever, rash, and swollen lymph nodes. - Agencies

Tunisian union calls national strike

MONITORING DESK

TUNIS: Tunisia's powerful labour union said on Monday it would hold a national strike over wages and the economy after refusing to take part in a limited dialogue proposed by the president as he rewrites the constitution. With more than a million members, the UGTT is Tunisia's most powerful political force and its call for a strike may present the biggest challenge yet to President Kais Saied after his seizure of broad powers and moves to one-man rule. Saied has focused on his political agenda since last summer when he brushed aside the parliament and discounted most of Tunisia's democratic constitution to say he would rule by decree despite a gathering economic crisis. The president's opponents accuse him of a coup that has undermined the democratic gains of the 2011 revolution that triggered the Arab spring, but he says his moves were legal and needed to save Tunisia from a prolonged political crisis.

First batch of 'Made in China' buses delivered to Pakistan

We will provide regular systematic training programs for employees, which is also a boost to local employment

DNA

BEIJING: The first batch of 120 Suzhou Higer buses have been delivered to Pakistan, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday. This will improve transport system in Karachi. As one of "Made in China" representatives, the buses will guarantee Pakistan's daily transportation, providing the locals with comfortable and perfect public transportation experience.

"We officially entered the Pakistani market in 2008. Last year, we sold a total of 115 passenger coaches and city buses locally. At the beginning of this year, we have launched in-depth cooperation with the governments of Sindh Province and Islamabad by customizing 250 and 30 buses respectively," said Zhang Bangguo, South Asian Market Overseas Account Manager of Higer buses, in an

exclusive interview with China Economic Net. With the delivery of the first batch of Higer buses, 130 buses will be further delivered to Sindh soon.

On the first day of the delivering, the Minister of Transport & Mass Transit Sindh and the Minister of Labour & Human Resources Sindh arrived at the scene for test ride of the Higer buses and delivered a speech. They both agreed that the first batch of buses have taken a solid step to improve the public transportation system in Karachi. As Higer's important product exported to Pakistan's largest city, the first batch of Higer buses meet the regulatory requirements of local government, and also have made a series of adaptive improvements according to habits and aesthetics of the locals. The first batch of Higer buses will provide services to six major cities in Sindh, Pakistan, including Karachi. The powertrain of

the buses, with a gasoline-electric hybrid design, can ensure normal operation and promote sustainable development of urban transportation. "Considering the high temperature in Pakistan, we have made research and development on the air conditioning system to meet the local needs. When the ambient temperature is 45 °C, the air conditioning system can lower the inner temperature to 23-25 °C within 30 minutes after the bus runs," emphasized Zhang. "And taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic, these buses are also equipped with a special air filtration system and a disinfecting spray system. After operation, the driver can press the button to control the automatic spray system to disinfect the bus." "At present, new energy buses are only operating in a few areas in Pakistan, such as Peshawar and Karachi. I think the follow-up market potential is very huge," according to

Zhang, he told CEN that further personnel expansion plans have been put on the agenda, more Pakistani employees will be recruited. "We will provide regular systematic training programs for employees, which is also a boost to local employment." Higer Bus has established a complete after-sales service team to provide after-sales service for customers in Pakistan, a country along "the Belt and Road". Superior production quality and considerate after-sales service have been widely recognized by the Pakistan people. With a new batch of Higer buses entering Pakistan, Higer will stay true to its original mission to make contributions to local public transportation. "The development of new energy buses is of great significance to Pakistan, which can not only reduce the local dependence on oil, but also achieve the long-term goal of green and low-carbon development," Zhang added.

RCCI seeks review of import ban list

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has demanded the government to reconsider the ban on import of luxury items.

RCCI President Nadeem Rauf in a statement said that "The government has taken a hasty decision without consulting stakeholders". Due to the same HS code the essential items are also subject to the same restriction. The import of vitamins and medicines (cocciostats) used in livestock, especially poultry feed, has been banned, which will further increase the price of meat and poultry.

President Nadeem Rauf said that a meeting of traders from the affected sectors has been convened in the chamber this week so that suggestions and solutions can be presented to the government. He said that imports of air conditioning, heating and chillers and related items have been banned, they are no longer a luxury, they are now needed in hospitals, colleges, univer-

sities, business centers and homes. Bakery products, eyeglasses, leather used in shoes, automobiles, lighting and many other items that do not come in luxury but have been banned due to the similar code or chapter, he said. The government should also be aware of the ground realities. There are many items that are not manufactured here. There is a fear of increasing smuggling which will further affect the revenue of the government, he added. He said that the business community was in favor of banning the import of luxury items in the current economic crisis but the list of bans also included essential items which needed to be reviewed. Crockerly under Ceramics has also been added to the ban list, adding that the government has not given any grace period, due to advance orders of many traders, the goods are lying at the port which takes a long time to clear. He said that there are still many restrictions in China due to COVID 19, many traders' payments have been stuck due to advance payment.



MINSK: Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan held a meeting with Nikolai Borisevich, Director General, Belarusian National Centre for Marketing. An accomplished diplomat and a good friend of Pakistan who until recently served as the Deputy Foreign Minister. The two sides discussed possibilities of further expanding the economic contacts. - DNA

China's hybrid oilseed to help ease edible oil shortage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's hybrid oilseed rape to help ease edible oil shortage in Pakistan, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Monday. According to Zhu Xiaobo, executive member of the Asia and Pacific Seed Association and General Manager of Wuhan Qingfa Hesheng Seed Company, hybrid canola variety has been planted in Pakistan on about 10,000 hectares of land, covering around 6000 households.

In the next three to five years, we expect it to expand to over 40,000 hectares and provide more, healthier edible oil to Pakistani people", Ms. Zhu Xiaobo told CEN in an interview. Edible oil shortage has long been a hot topic in Pakistan, which imports edible oil worth \$250 million annually, accounting for 75% of its entire consumption. The hybrid canola developed by the company and planted in Bhakkar-Multan, Draya Khan, Chishtian, etc. of Punjab, features earlier maturation, short strain, and low content of erucic acid and glucosinolate, two substances that adversely affect people's cardio-

vascular health. So far, the hybrid variety has been certified by Pakistani authorities for its health value. Farmers planting this variety will obtain government subsidies. Currently, rapeseed is being cultivated on 0.23 million hectares of land across Pakistan, covering 12% of the entire oilseeds cultivated area. According to estimation, this area is likely to be increased by 10%-15% this year. "During FY2021 (July-March), among the 2.917 million tonnes of edible imported, local production is provisionally estimated at 0.374 million tonnes, grabbing a mere 13% share", told Mr. Ghazanfar Ali, Head of Marketing, Evyol Group, an agriculture services provider group and business partner of Qingfa Hesheng. "Pakistan needs to ensure food security for a fast-multiplying population. For this, we ought to be independent in local seed production. This is where we look forward to China's cooperation for meaningful technical support both in terms of training and development of local human resources and farm mechanization", he said. In Pakistan, the prevailing rape mustard is low in oil yield but rich in erucic acid and glucosinolate. On the other hand,

Chinese oilseed rape varieties used to be vulnerable to pod splitting and lodging. "Through hybrid technologies, we overcome these disadvantages by lowering erucic content to less than 3% and the glucosinolate content to less than 30 micromoles per gram. The plants are shorter and more resilient to gusts. The growth period is shortened by 8 to 10 days, which allows farmers to arrange the next crops and get better output of whole year", Ms. Zhu introduced.

While promoting the hybrid canola variety, Mr. Ghazanfar Ali found that awareness about better quality oil, higher yield, and higher market price of the hybrid canola is yet to be improved for farmers to further tap the benefits of the hybrid technology. "Luckily, consumers are paying more attention to health when it comes to food and ingredients", Mr. Ghazanfar Ali added. Punjab farmers told the reporter that for each acre of this hybrid oilseed rape, they can get a subsidy up to Rs. 5000. "We bought the designated variety, register at the local agriculture extension department, and then we will receive the government subsidy", a farmer in Multan said. "Production and health, this is what I expect out of this hybrid variety".

Turkish Akinci UCAVs land in Baku

DNA

BAKU: Turkey's Bayraktar Akinci unmanned combat aerial vehicles have landed in Azerbaijan for TEKNOFEST Aerospace and Technology Festival scheduled for May 26-29 in Baku, Azernews reports, citing the Baykar Company. As the company said, two Akinci drones took off from northern Tekirdag's Corlu region on Saturday, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon, and flew to Heydar Aliyev International Airport in Baku from Turkey via the Georgia airspace. The UCAVs covered over 2,000 kilometers distance for five hours, passing through three countries, the first such a trip in Turkish aviation history. Akinci will meet aerospace and tech enthusiasts in Baku from May 26 to 29, with other cutting-edge military and technology equipment manufactured by Turkish enterprises. Since its debut in 2018, TEKNOFEST has been Turkey's gathering place for all aerospace and technology stakeholders, as well as for corporations and students. The event will host a variety of events, including warplane, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), and helicopter air displays, as well as conferences, summits, competitions, and fairs. Many more pioneers, like Aselsan, Havelsan, Roketsan, STM, Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI), and its engine manufacturing subsidiary, TUSAS Engine Industries (TEI), will be showing their vehicles and equipment at the event, in addition to drone magnate and Akinci inventor Baykar

Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan set up expert council

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan have signed a memorandum on the establishment of an Expert Council, Azernews reports, citing Trend.

Azerbaijani Center for Analysis of International Relations Board Chairman Farid Shafiyev and Kazakh Institute for Strategic Studies Director Yerkin Tukumov signed the document on the creation of the Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan expert council on May 23 in Baku on the margins of a round-table to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Speaking at the roundtable, Farid Shafiyev stated that the creation of the Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan Council of Experts is necessary for a correct response to events in the region. Noting that the experts of the council will have to demonstrate the correct reaction to the events taking place in the region, he added that the latest changes require a correct assessment of the events taking place in the world not only between the two countries but also the states of the region generally.

"Our expert council will contribute to the correct assessment of current challenges and realities. In addition, issues related to the humanitarian, political, and economic spheres will be discussed within the framework of the Council of Experts. This council will serve to further develop topical issues. It will be useful both for government agencies and for society as a whole," he said. Moreover, Yerkin Tukumov said that the issue of the establishment of a Business



Council between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan was under discussion. Noting that over 500 Azerbaijani companies have been registered in Kazakhstan so far, he added that in this regard, there is a need to create the Business Council between the two countries. "The creation of the Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan Expert Council will also make a great contribution to the development of relations between the two countries," he opined. Tukumov also noted the successful

development of cooperation between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan in a number of areas. Moreover, Kazakh Ambassador Serzhan Abydykarimov stated that new opportunities are opening up to strengthen Azerbaijan as a regional center. "New opportunities are opening up that will strengthen the role of Azerbaijan in the region in the post-conflict period. In this sense, the Zangazur corridor opens new doors for economic cooperation," he said.

Noting that relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan are built on the basis of a common culture, spiritual values, and language, the ambassador stated that the mutually beneficial trade relations and mutual support in the world arena are the basis of strong relations between the two countries. "The long-term warm friendship between national leader Heydar Aliyev and the first President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev made a special contribution to strengthening relations between fraternal states," he said. At the same time, Farid Shafiyev stated that the importance of the Middle Corridor [Trans-Caspian International Transport Route] is growing due to the current geopolitical situation in the region. He emphasized that there are many new issues on the agenda of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. "One of such initiatives as the Middle Corridor - the route from China to Europe, plays a big role in the current agenda. The importance of this project is growing, especially in connection with the current geopolitical situation in the region," he said. Noting that the agreements on the simplification of customs procedures between the two countries have already been signed he added that there is potential for further development. Shafiyev also stressed that close cooperation between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan should be actively developed. Diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan were established on August 30, 1992. The Embassy of Kazakhstan in Azerbaijan was opened on January 9, 1993, and the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Kazakhstan on March 1, 2004.

Asian markets rise as Biden 'considers' lifting China tariffs

HONG KONG: Asian stocks rose Monday after US President Joe Biden said he was considering lifting some Trump-era trade tariffs imposed on China, although concerns over inflation and growth weighed on sentiment. Tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese imports are due to expire in July, and Biden has faced growing calls to get rid of the punitive duties to help combat the highest US inflation in more than four decades. Biden's comments Monday during a visit to Tokyo come after Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen last week said some of the duties imposed by former president Donald Trump "seem to impose more harm on consumers and businesses" and do little to address real issues posed by the Asian giant. The president also said a recession in the United States was not inevitable but acknowledged the economic pain felt by American consumers, saying "this is going to take some time". Ending the tariffs could help cut roaring US inflation by making imports cheaper. Biden also announced that 13 countries had joined a new, US-led Asia-Pacific trade initiative, although there are questions about the pact's effectiveness. Investors will be looking to the release on Wednesday of notes from the latest Federal Reserve committee meeting for clues on further rate hikes by the US central bank. - APP

Spain confirms 31 monkeypox cases, rest under investigation

OVIEDO: The number of monkeypox cases continue to increase in Spain, with at least 31 cases confirmed, and the rest being under investigation. While the virus has now been found in around a dozen countries worldwide, Spain remains home to the largest known cluster at the moment. Madrid has been the epicenter of the transmission. On Sunday, Enrique Ruiz Escudero, the region's health minister, said there were 30 confirmed cases and another 40 under investigation. Health authorities have traced the outbreak to a gay bathhouse in downtown Madrid, which has temporarily shut its doors as an investigation into the unprecedented spread of the virus continues. However, at least a few people who have tested positive for the virus may have caught it earlier - during the Maspalomas Pride festival in the Canary Islands that ran from May 5-15. "Looking at the dates of when the party in the Canary Islands took place, it looks like it started there and then later in the bathhouse in Madrid," said Escudero. - Agencies

'US doesn't single out India on rights abuses'

WASHINGTON: The United States doesn't "single India out" on its human rights violations and pursuit of anti-Muslim policies, US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan has said, ahead of President Joe Biden's meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Tokyo Tuesday, on the sidelines of the Quad summit. Quad, officially the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, is an anti-China alliance led by the United States that includes India, Australia and Japan. Sullivan, who briefed the journalists aboard presidential flights to Tokyo, was asked by a reporter how the U.S. administration "balances" engaging economically with PM Modi, given his serious "human rights abuses" and targeting of Muslims. "President Biden has been clear from the beginning of this administration that we'll speak out when we see any form of departure from or deviation from basic principles, fundamental freedoms, human rights, the values of democratic institutions, and the rule of law," Sullivan said. "That's true for a range of countries. And, you know, we don't single India out," he added. - APP

Briefs

Iran to avenge terrorist attack



DNA

TEHRAN: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has vowed that the Islamic Republic will definitely take revenge for the assassination of an Iranian anti-terrorist commander. Prior to his departure from Mehrabad Airport in Tehran, President Raisi emphasized on Monday morning that those who have been defeated in military fields in dealing with Resistance forces, are showing their frustration in this way. Addressing reporters at the airport, he expressed both congratulations and condolences to family and colleagues of the great martyr, noting that undoubtedly the global arrogance's hands are being seen in the crime. Colonel Hassan Sayyad Khodaei, a member of Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force, was assassinated in an armed attack by two motorcyclists in Tehran on Sunday. The terrorist attack took place around 4 p.m. local time on Sunday, when the IRGC member was getting out of his car to enter his home in an eastern neighborhood of the Iranian capital. Nour News website, which is close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, reacted to the assassination in a tweet, stressing that the killing of the IRGC member was "miscalculated crossing of a red line that will change many calculations."

Panic spreads as Tarbela dam hits dead level

DNA

LAHORE: Tarbela Dam on the Indus River reaches its lowest point today as the water level was measured at dead level i.e. 1,398 feet, as a result of unusually low inflows during the summer months, exacerbating the water crisis in the lowlands. This year, on March 20, 2022, the water storage capacity of the Tarbela Dam dropped to its minimal level, leading to a drastic fall in irrigation supplies and hydroelectric power output amidst extended periods of load-shedding. The current lower trend in river flows portends disaster for the agriculture sector, which is already struggling under an unprecedented heatwave, which causes abiotic stress in plants. According to the WAPDA report, the river inflows and outflows at Tarbela, Mangla, and Chashma on May 22, 2022, as well as the reservoir levels and barrages, were as follows: Indus inflow at Tarbela, 82,800 cusecs and outflow, 95,000 cusecs; Kabul inflow at Nowshera, 28,700 cusecs and outflow, 28,700 cusecs; Jhelum inflow at Mangla, 36,100 cusecs and outflow, 33,800 cusecs; Chenab inflow at Marala, 31,400 cusecs and outflow, 21,400 cusecs.

62 booked over pro-Pakistan slogan

NEWS DESK

JHARKHAND: At least, 62 people have been booked by Indian police for allegedly raising pro-Pakistan slogans in the Indian state of Jharkhand. These people were booked by Indian police on raising pro-Pakistan slogans, a senior police officer said. A video clip of the procession, where several people were heard shouting 'Pakistan zindabad', went viral on social media, following which the police swung into action and registered a case in the matter.

Malaysia's economy to expand by 5.75 per cent

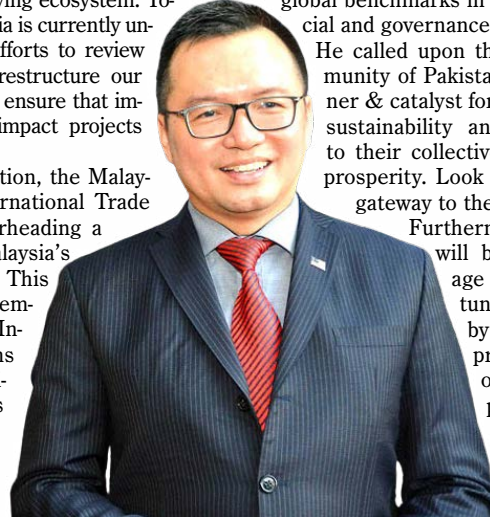
Malaysia a gateway to ASEAN for Pak products

The Acting High Commissioner of Malaysia Deddy Faisal says I urge both Malaysian and Pakistani businesses, chambers and associations to have more frequent interactions, besides leveraging on each other's strength and capacity

DNA

MANDIBAHUDDIN: The Acting High Commissioner of Malaysia Deddy Faisal has said Malaysia has always been an open trading nation and preferred investment destination and will continue to remain so driven by our Unique Value Proposition to investors. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is optimistic that Malaysia's economy will expand by 5.75 per cent this year, driven by pent-up domestic demand and continued strong external demand. This is in line with the government's growth projection of between 5.3 per cent and 6.3 per cent for 2022. Our economy expanded by 3.1 per cent last year. The Malaysian envoy expressed these views while speaking at the Mandi Bahauddin Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He further said, Malaysia's financial sector remains resilient and that it was encouraged by its reforms that focused on inclusion, economic transformation, and a sustainable economy. This was clearly reflective of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob's Keluarga Malaysia concept which focuses on inclusion, togetherness and gratitude aimed at bringing the people together in helping the He said Malaysia's ongoing investment promotion efforts have successfully kept us on the map of

investors. We believe that it is crucial to keep our investment policies relevant, resilient and responsive to the evolving ecosystem. Towards this end, Malaysia is currently undertaking concerted efforts to review existing policies and restructure our investment strategy to ensure that implementation of high-impact projects can be expedited. Guided by this aspiration, the Malaysian Ministry of International Trade and Industry is spearheading a holistic reform of Malaysia's investment agenda. This new agenda will be premised on the National Investment Aspirations (NIA) which will navigate Malaysia towards a regional investment hub with a view to increasing economic complexity, creating high-value jobs, extending domestic linkages, developing new and existing clusters, and improving inclusivity. ' Our new investment strategies will provide the necessary impetus to pursue high-technology and sustainable investments as well as to intensify innovation, striking a balance between economic and

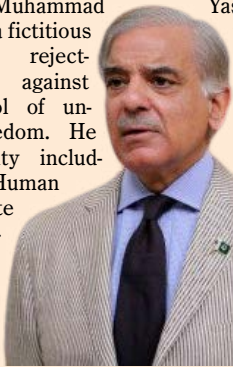


environmental sustainability while reducing dependency on foreign labour, in line with global benchmarks in environment, social and governance'. He called upon the business community of Pakistan to be the partner & catalyst for reform, to drive sustainability and to contribute to their collective goal of shared prosperity. Look at Malaysia as a gateway to the ASEAN market. Furthermore, investors will be able to leverage into the opportunities opened up by RCEP which provides a market of 3 billion people. He added, Pakistan is, and remains an important economic partner for Malaysia. This is demonstrated most prominently by our bilateral economic, trade and investment relations, which continue to grow from strength to strength despite the global challenges throughout the decades. ' I urge both Malaysian and Pakistani businesses, chambers and associations to have

more frequent interactions, besides leveraging on each other's strength and capacity. Let us work together to enrich the value of our investments. Let us restart, recover, revitalise and reform towards greater economic resilience and progress'. I would like to record my sincere appreciation and gratitude to Mandi Bahauddin Chamber of Commerce & Industry for inviting me to your beautiful city. I am delighted to meet everyone, particularly to engage with prominent businessmen of this city. It is a privilege to be here to speak to you at meeting to connect Malaysia and Pakistani businesses as well as sharing with you Malaysia's economic updates. Trade, at its very foundations, is about people connecting across the world. It is about understanding each other and cooperating for the good of all nations and our economies. The resilience of our trade relies on the depth of these global connections, but these connections cannot only have trade at their core. 4. We must have people connecting, across families, politics, education, tourism, work and so many other walks-of-life to truly develop robust relationships between nations. It is then, from these relationships based on broad way to connect, that we can build robust, resilient trade for the prosperity of all, he concluded.

PM strongly condemns Yasin's conviction

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday strongly condemned the conviction of prominent Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik by the Indian court in a fictitious terrorism case. He said the Indian failed to uphold the human rights and the Human Rights Council of India's extra-judicial measures of the government of Pakistan highlighted India's actions against Yasin Malik and other Kashmiri leadership at all international forums including the human rights bodies and the forum of Organization of Islamic Cooperation. PM Sharif said similar to the illegal measures of August 5, 2019, the case against Yasin Malik was also unlawful and pointed out that India was following a deliberate plan to overthrow the real leadership representing the Kashmiris. He said the Indian government, which was afraid of the body of Syed Ali Geelani also feared Yasin Malik, a great symbol of Kashmir. He mentioned that thousands of Kashmiri martyrs, including Ashraf Sehrai and his son were the milestones of the Kashmir's plebiscite. The prime minister termed all these martyrs a proof of the tyranny and brutality of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), adding that the people of IIOJK could not be enslaved by India's draconian laws against Kashmiris. - APP



People to make history on May 25

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Umar on Monday said that people of Pakistan will make history on May 25 as PTI chairman announced Long March to Islamabad on Sunday. Talking to media, Asad Umar said that all the arrangements for the march have been made. "After this day, decisions for Pakistan will not be made behind the closed doors," he said. He went on to say that decisions regarding Pakistan will not be made by the illegal money or by conspiracies and after Haaqeeqi Azadi March, masses will be prosperous. On the other hand, PTI decided to hold protest at Numaish Chorangi in Karachi while live screening of the footages from Islamabad Long March will be shown there. President of PTI Karachi Bilal Ghaffar will be leading the protests in Karachi.

Australia's new PM sworn in ahead of Quad meeting

FOREIGN DESK

CANBERRA: Anthony Albanese has been sworn in as Australia's new leader and will fly immediately to an international summit. Mr Albanese's Labor Party defeated Scott Morrison's conservative government in an election on Saturday. It remains unclear whether Mr Albanese will form a majority or govern with the support of cross-benchers. The prime minister left for Tokyo on Monday to meet the leaders of the so-called Quad nations - the US, India and Japan. Earlier in the day, he was sworn in with four key cabinet members, including new Foreign Minister Penny Wong, who is travelling with him to Japan. Richard Marles is the new deputy prime minister and employment minister, Jim Chalmers is treasurer, and Katy Gallagher is attorney-general and finance minister. It is Australia's first

Labor government in almost a decade. The party has won 74 lower house seats but counting continues to determine whether they can get the needed to form a majority. But the primary vote for both major parties fell - almost a third of Australians put the Greens, independents and other minor parties as their first preference. The Quad group is seen as largely aiming to counter growing Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region. It will meet on Tuesday following recent diplomatic tensions in the Pacific, after the Solomon Islands last month signed a security pact with China. The US and Australia hold fears the deal could allow China to build a naval base there. In a statement ahead of the



meeting, Mr Albanese said: "The Quad Leaders' Summit brings together four leaders of great liberal democracies - Australia, Japan, India, and the United States of America - in support of a free, open and resilient Indo-Pacific." Ms Wong - Australia's first overseas-born foreign minister - signalled they would bring "new energy and much more to the table" on climate action, after "a lost decade". Climate change played a huge role in the election result, with a surge in support for candidates wanting urgent action. Mr Morrison's government had committed to a 2030 emissions reduction target of 26%-28% - about half that of the UK and US.

SBP raises interest rate to 13.75%

DNA

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday raised the benchmark policy rate by 150 basis points (bps) to 13.75% for the next six weeks to maintain the balance between inflation and economic growth. The central bank believes that this "effective action" was important to anchor inflation expectations and maintain external stability. "This action, together with much needed fiscal consolidation, should help moderate demand to a more sustainable pace while keeping inflation expectations anchored and containing risks to external stability," the central bank said in its monetary policy statement (MPS). The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) met today for the first time under the leadership of acting governor Dr Murtaza Syed to take decisions regarding the key benchmark interest rate. It is worth mentioning that the SBP has cumulatively increased the rate by 675 basis points since September 2021 to control inflation and narrow the current account deficit. Hinting towards the next Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting scheduled to be held on July 7, the SBP said: "Going forward, to strengthen monetary policy transmission, these rates will be linked to the policy rate and will adjust automatically, while continuing to remain below the policy rate in order to incentivise exports." "The MPC will continue to carefully monitor developments affecting medium-term prospects for inflation, financial stability, and growth," it assured. According to the monetary policy statement, external pressures remain elevated and the inflation outlook has deteriorated due to both home-grown and international factors.

ECP denotifies 25 PTI MPAs de-seated over defection

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan on Monday de-notified the 25 PTI MPAs that it had de-seated over defection from the party on Friday. The decision to de-seat the 25 PTI dissidents came during the announcement of the verdict in a case pertaining to the dissident members of the Punjab Assembly (MPAs). Today, the ECP issued official notifications for the cancellation of the dissidents' election from respective constituencies of Punjab and Punjab Assembly seats reserved for women and non-Muslims.

Salik invites Chinese companies for investment

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Board of Investment Chaudhary Salik Hussain has invited Chinese companies for investment in agriculture and livestock sectors of Pakistan and assured them of full facilitation. He was speaking at an MoU signing ceremony in Islamabad on Monday, between two investment companies of China and Pakistan including Optima Integration Group, China and Asia Pak Investments, Pakistan. The MoU is aimed at enhancing Business to Business agricultural cooperation between the two countries. The project between the signing parties will comprise setting up a supply chain for seafood export for export from Pakistan to China. It will include a high-tech processing facility and related technology transfer. In the first phase, the estimated investment will be around 50 million dollars that will create more than 100 jobs in Gwadar and Karachi in Fishing, Power and Logistics sectors. The Minister appreciated the interest of Chinese side in Agriculture & Livestock sector of Pakistan particularly, Fish and Seafood industry.



Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Nawabzada Shazain Bugti in a meeting with Chinese delegation lead by Mr. Cheng Guoping, Commissioner of Counter Terrorism in Islamabad. - APP

World faces a turning point: Zelenskiy warns

He demanded an oil embargo, the blockage of all Russian banks and termination of all trade. Foreign businesses should withdraw completely from Russia, and the Russian IT industry should be cut off from the West

NEWS DESK

DAVOS: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy told global business leaders meeting at Davos on Monday that the world faces a turning point and has to ratchet up sanctions against Russia as a warning to other countries considering using brute force. "History is at a turning point... This is really the moment when it is decided whether brute force will rule the world," Zelenskiy, sporting his trademark olive green T-shirt, said in an address via video link. His speech kicked off in earnest the four-day World Economic Forum that gathers some 2,000 business and economic leaders as well as experts, with Ukraine topping the agenda. "Everyone of you have to understand: We are defending you, personally... We are fighting, actually, for every one of you and everyone has to un-

derstand that," said the mayor of Kyiv, Vitali Klitschko, another member of the large Ukrainian delegation that travelled to Davos. In stark contrast to the past, Russian state institutions and private companies which threw some of the most glitzy parties with black caviar, vintage champagne and foie gras, have not been invited to the Alpine resort this year. The former "Russia House", Moscow's base at Davos in past years, has been turned into a "Russian War Crimes House" by Ukrainian artists, exhibiting pictures of misery and devastation caused by the war in Ukraine. Moscow has denied targeting civilians or involvement in



war crimes while it carries out what it calls a "special military operation" in Ukraine and says Western sanctions and arms deliveries for Kyiv amount to a "proxy war" waged against it by the West. Zelenskiy urged countries to put more pressure on Moscow and accused them of not exhausting sanctions. "The sanctions should be maximum, so that Russia - and every other potential aggressor who wants to wage a brutal war against its neighbour - clearly knows the immediate consequences of their actions," he said. He demanded an oil embargo, the blockage of all Russian banks and termination of all trade. Foreign business-

es should withdraw completely from Russia, and the Russian IT industry should be cut off from the West. The sanctions must set a precedent, deterring any other aggressors in the decades to come, Zelenskiy said, adding Russia had caused its decline by its own actions. The renaming of the Russia House "is an example of their transformation, what Russia has done to itself, of becoming a state of war criminals and what it brings to the world: It inspires other potential aggressors to act," he said. The Ukrainian former world boxing heavyweight champion, Wladimir Klitschko, demanded that sanctions also target Russian athletes. "Here in Switzerland is the headquarters of the IOC, International Olympic Committee, and I believe that Russian Olympic team must be banned and not participate," he said. "Nothing against the nationality or against the athletes, but they represent the regime of Russia, this aggressive regime that has started this senseless war."