



# Islamabad POST

Thursday, May 26, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

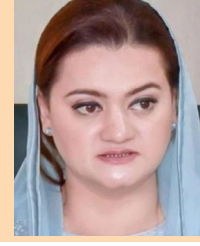
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### Indian court sentences Yasin Malik to life in prison

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### Marriyam assures APNS of full support

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### Benzema can create legacy in UCL final

Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

### PTIs sit-ins cause damage: PM

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Wednesday he gets "goose-bumps" when he recalls the disruption caused by PTI's 2014 sit-in during PML-N's government. "We should not be wasting time in dividing the nation and staging sit-ins. Whenever I recall the 2014 sit-in, I get goosebumps," the prime minister said while addressing the workers of the Karot Hydropower Project. The prime minister's comments came as the PTI is marching from Peshawar to Islamabad under party chairman and former PM Imran Khan's leadership.

### West lacking 'unity' over Ukraine

APP

DAVOS: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Wednesday that the West remained divided over the extent of its support for Ukraine in its defence against Russia's months-long invasion. "Unity is about weapons. My question is, is there this unity in practice? I can't see it. Our huge advantage over Russia would be when we are truly united," Zelensky said during a panel discussion on Ukraine at the World Economic Forum. Washington and European countries have poured billions of dollars' worth of arms into Ukraine to help the country's outgunned forces beat back the better-armed Russian invaders.

### Kaira condemns Indian court verdict

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira has strongly condemned the unfortunate verdict issued by an Indian court against Yasin Malik and termed it as totally outrageous and unjustified. According to a media release issued on Wednesday, Kaira said the conviction of Yasin Malik based on flimsy and fabricated grounds was a blatant violation of basic human rights. - APP

## Police, PTI workers clash across country

# Imran in Islamabad; wants elections date

ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan on Wednesday night reached Islamabad leading a huge convoy. "No amount of state oppression and fascism by this imported govt can stop or deter our march," the former premier wrote on his official Twitter handle. We have entered Punjab and will Inshallah be heading towards Islamabad. The PTI chief in a fresh statement to his supporters this evening asked them to take to the streets following the top court's verdict regarding the venue of the political gathering. "I urge the entire nation to take to the streets with their families after the decision of the Supreme Court," Imran said in a video statement released from an undisclosed location. The former premier added that he was on his way to the famous D-Chowk and asked his supporters to come out of their homes to convey a message that they won't accept anyone's subservience. Soon after Imran Khan's announcement that he will reach Islamabad's D-Chowk soon, the Capital Police vowed to stop anyone from entering the federal capital's Red Zone. "If anyone tried to come near the Red Zone, he will be dealt with an iron hand," Islamabad IG Dr Akber Nasir said. Akber said that he has asked the officers not to use force in other areas of the capital.

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA



### PTI, govt accord was almost done!!

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: At one point in time a deal between the PTI and government was almost reached. It is learnt that a deal was struck between the PTI and the government and it was expected that there will be no dharna in Islamabad. The PTI agreed to only hold a procession and then disperse. According to sources that the Establishment tried to facilitate a deal between the PTI and the government. In return the government was to announce dissolution of the assemblies. Another option was that the PTI MPs would return to the parliament, become part of the proceedings for election reforms etc and then Assembly shall be dissolved. It may be mentioned here that the Shehbaz govt had already decided to step down and pave the way for the fresh elections, however it wanted to have IMF deal first. But the PTI suddenly announced the long march date, which turned the things topsy-turvy. According to sources, Asad Umar, Pervez Khatak and Shah Mahmood Qureshi took part in

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## PTI's long march failed to win support: Sana



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan on Wednesday said the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf's (PTI) long march towards Islamabad failed to win the masses' support as only a small number of people had come out on its appeal. "I'm thankful to the masses for rejecting Imran Khan's violent long march. Since morning only a few hundred

### SC allows protest at H-9

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed the PTI to hold its Azadi March protest near Peshawar Mor between the H-9 and G-9 area of Islamabad and restrained the government from arresting its leaders and

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### Will not submit to PTI pressure, says Maryam

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday while appealing that the institutions should not make decision to placate people resorting to pressure tactics said that that it would be the best decision if the establishment would work within the ambit of constitution. Addressing a press conference in Lahore on Wednesday, she said that the judiciary should also deal with this fitna as the holy Qur an commands. "The PML-N vice president said that her party respects Supreme Court's decision, ordering the government to allow PTI to organise long march at a ground between H-9 and G-9 areas of the federal capital. "The decision is basically a safe exit for them. Their lawyer kept saying in court that they wanted a specific ground which can only hold 10,000 people. To this, the government lawyer repeatedly said the ground can only hold 10,000 people but PTI knew they cannot produce more people than that number so they insisted," she added. Regarding PTI's talks with the government, Maryam Nawaz said that PML-N leader Ayaz Sadiq was contacted by Asad Qasir and Pawad Chaudhry two days ago for the talks and proposed that the government announce elections time frame within 8 to 10 months to which Sadiq said that the proposal would be laid before party supremo Nawaz Sharif.

## Pakistan and Indonesia hold dialogue in Bali

Both sides express satisfaction over pace of bilateral relations

NEWS DESK / DNA

BALI: The 3rd Round of Policy Planning Dialogue between Pakistan and Indonesia was held on 24 May 2022 in Bali, Indonesia. Ms. Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, Additional Secretary (Asia Pacific), led the Pakistan delegation, while the Indonesian side was headed by Dr. Yayan Ganda Hayat Mulyana, Head of the Foreign Policy Strategy Agency (FPSA). Pakistan's Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr. Muhammad Hassan and Ambassador Adam Mulawarman Tugio of Indonesia to Pakistan also attended the Dialogue.

The two sides expressed satisfaction over the pace of development of bilateral relations, which are rooted in shared history, culture and faith. Exchanging views on the growth of Pakistan-Indonesia ties over the last

72 years, they agreed on enhanced bilateral exchanges at all levels to further solidify the relationship. They also agreed on the need to further strengthen people-to-people contacts in all dimensions to the mutual benefit of the two countries. As the two biggest Islamic countries, the two sides discussed issues pertaining to Muslim communities and OIC including Islamophobia and the situations in Palestine, Afghanistan and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Global developments and regional issues were also discussed at length including peace and security in South Asia, the Asia-Pacific and beyond. The two sides emphasized the importance of continued dialogue and agreed to remain engaged on issues of mutual interest through various existing mechanisms, at bilateral and multilateral levels.

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# Yasin Malik sentenced to life imprisonment

The NIA court handed down two life sentences and five 10-year terms of rigorous imprisonment, which will run concurrently. Moreover, a penalty of 1million has also been slapped on the Kashmiri leader

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: An Indian court Wednesday sentenced Kashmiri freedom fighter, Yasin Malik, to life imprisonment in a terror funding case, the country's media reported. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had sought the death penalty for the Kashmiri leader and chief of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), but the court awarded him two life imprisonments, according to the media. The NIA court handed down two life sentences and five 10-year terms of rigorous imprisonment, which will run concurrently. Moreover, a penalty of 1million has also been slapped on the Kashmiri leader, according to NDTV. The Hurriyat leader was convicted in the terror-funding case last week after he pleaded guilty to all the charges last Tuesday, including the ones under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). Yasin had refused to contest the charges, including Section 16 (terrorist act),

### DG ISPR condemns life sentence to Yasin Malik

RAWALPINDI: Director-General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) has issued a statement condemning the Indian court's decision to sentence Kashmir liberation activist Yasin Malik. The statement issued by the DG ISPR said that India has sentenced Yasin Malik over fabricated allegations. These kinds of acts by India would not be able to suppress Kashmir's struggle for independence, it added. The DG ISPR added that the real struggle for Kashmir is continuous in the Indian Occupied Kashmir. We stand with our Kashmiris brothers in their fight for autonomy and independence, he added. The statement from the military's media wing came after an Indian court awarded life imprisonment to Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Chairman, Muhammad Yasin Malik. - DNA



### Pakistan rejects life sentence verdict

ISLAMABAD: The Indian Charge d'Affaires (Cd'A) in Islamabad was called to the Foreign Office Wednesday and conveyed Pakistan's strongest condemnation and rejection of the malafide conviction and sentencing of Hurriyat leader Mr. Yasin Malik in a grossly suspicious and contrived case registered under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and Indian Penal Code (IPC), dating back to 2017, filed against him by the Indian National Investigation Agency (NIA). The Indian Cd'A was conveyed Government of Pakistan's strong indignation over the highly reprehensible sentencing of Mr. Yasin Malik after his conviction on fabricated charges, denial of fair trial and inhuman incarceration despite his deteriorating health, in complete defiance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). It was highlighted that by implicating him in a concocted case and carrying out a bogus and one-sided trial, India has again misused

Section 17 (raising funds for a terrorist act), Section 18 (conspiracy to commit a terrorist act) and Section 20 (being a member of a terrorist gang or organisation) of the UAPA and Sections 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 124-A (sedition) of the Indian Penal Code. The Indian government arrested the Hurriyat leader in 2019, the same year when the special status of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir was revoked. Malik's wife Mushaal Hussein Mullick said the sentencing was illegitimate. "Verdict in minutes by Indian kangaroo court," she wrote on Twitter. "The iconic leader will never surrender." In Kashmir's main city of Srinagar, police fired tear gas and pellets to disperse stone-pelting protesters outside Malik's residence. In response, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said "today is a black day" for Indian democracy and its justice system, noting that despite the order, the idea of freedom Malik symbolises could never be imprisoned.

Continued on Page 06

# Global warming poses threats to human lives, aquatic resources

PESHAWAR: Misal Khan, (83), who was busy like a honeybee while threshing his wheat crop at his fields under the blistering sun in his native village, suddenly collapsed after feeling dizziness apparently due to heatstroke. Being a resident of Dheri Ishaq in Nowshera district, Khan's sons, who were also around and busy in work along with their father rushed to a nearby clay pot and sprinkled water on his face and head in order to get their father senses but to no avail. 'I dashed towards my 'Baba Jan' after he fell off the thresher on a hay-stock and became unconscious. We suddenly bundled him into a datsun in a hurry to shift him to a nearest Government Rashid Hussain Shaheed Hospital, Pabbi after witnessing blood was oozing out from his nose profusely and mouth was foaming. "My Baba was all-well in the morning and had a breakfast with us before mustering labourers for threshing wheat in open fields at about 12:10pm in a sweltering sun," Khurshid Khan, his young son at Pabbi hospital observed while talking to APP. He said the doctors informed him that his father had suffered severe heat-stroke, which ruptured his nasal vein causing bleeding. "The patient's condition was precarious when he was brought to the hospital as a vein coming from head to nose was ruptured, which caused heavy flow of blood with swollen throat, vomiting and other heatstroke symptoms," said head of ENT Department, Dr Aziz Khan. He said these heat waves' symptoms were mostly witnessed due to the rise of tem-

perature owing to climate change and global warming posing serious threats to humans, animals, birds and aquatic species. "The patient was lucky enough to have been brought to the hospital in time as he has low immunity level due to age factor", he added. Dr Aziz said, "heat waves are more dangerous for old citizens and children due to their low immunity and their direct exposure to scorching sun may prove fatal." Dr. Zaheeruddin Babar, Director and Chief Spokesman Met Office, Islamabad said the plain areas of Sindh and Punjab were severely hit by heat-waves this month and its spill-over to mountainous areas up to lower Swat, Chitral, Chillas, Hunza and Gilgit were witnessed. Due to an increase in global warming, he said, rain patterns had undergone changes over the recent years for countries like Pakistan due to deforestation and increase in hazardous emissions. Pakistan is home to over 7,253 known glaciers, including around 543 in Chitral Valley most anywhere in the world except polar regions, feeds our rivers and contributing 75percent stored water supply vital for the country's agro-based economy. The chief weather forecast guru said melting of glaciers and ice-packs in lower elevations in northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan and Hindukash region especially in Chitral would increase if the reasons leading to global warming and climate change were not addressed. Terming global warming an international issue, Dr Zaheer said Pakistan was among 10 countries in the world most vulnerable to climate change and

feared that the earth in south asian countries would become inhabitable after a few decades if burning of fossil fuels like coal, vehicles' emissions and deforestation continued with an existing rate." Dr Zaheer said an increase of carbon dioxide in air due to greenhouse gas emissions, brick kilns and smoke emitting vehicles were largely contributing to rise of temperature and caused heatstroke besides air pollution. Ikhtiar Wali Khan, PML-N Spokesperson and Member Provincial Assembly told APP that vanishing of endangered Shisham, Siris and Peepal canopy trees due to urbanization have resulted in a substantial increase in temperature in Peshawar region. Following ruthless chopping of these indigenous trees, he said Peshawar was today engulfed by polluted air and nearly five million of its people were exposed to heat waves in its wake. History revealed that Peshawar was lush green surrounded by a thick forest as mentioned by first Mughal Emperor Zaheeruddin Babar in his book "Tuzke Babri," but unfortunately one found no traces of the green gold today. Ikhtiar Wali said today one can find withered Shisham while going through Swat Canal linking Katlang-Swabi, Michi Canal in Dargai-Malakand, Abezai branch in Charsadda and outskirts of Peshawar. Today migratory birds like Houbara and Cranes can hardly be seen in Peshawar's outskirts for which once it was famous and aquatic species like Masher and Trout in River Swat and Kabul were decreased due to rapid increase in water pollution.



HARIPUR: German ambassador interacts with members of civil society during his recent visit to Haripur. - DNA

## Crackdown on beggars intensified

FAISALABAD: The anti-beggary squad of the Social Welfare Department caught 15 beggars from different intersections on Wednesday. According to official sources, beggars were taken into custody from Jamia Chishtia Chowk, outside Kutchery Bazaar, Saleemi Chowk, Allied Hospital, Bilal Road, University Road, and Station Chowk. They were handed over to the police for further legal action. - APP

## PHA turning city into lush-green

He said that a special monitoring unit had also been constituted for regular inspection of green areas on a daily basis

FAISALABAD: The Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) is actively working to develop parks and turn the city into lush-green. Presiding over a meeting here on Wednesday, Director General PHA Muhammad Ayub Khan directed all town in-charges to beautify the green areas by planting colorful plants in respect of the summer weather. He said that a special monitoring unit had also been constituted for regular inspection of green areas on a daily basis. He said that in connection with beautification of the city, a comprehensive report from director engineering had also been sought. - APP

## VC inaugurates EPI Center of excellence at KMU



### OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq vice-chancellor Khyber Medical University (KMU), Peshawar in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Department of Health inaugurated the EPI center of excellence at KMU. This center will provide vaccination for 12 childhood diseases according to the national immunization schedule. The center will be open from 8 am to 8 pm Monday to Saturday. Assistant Prof. and in charge of KMU Mass vaccination center Dr. Khalid Rehman, Dr. Mohsin DD

EPI, Dr. Arif EPI coordinator Peshawar, Dr. Feroz Shah Deputy DHO, and Dr. Asad were also present at the occasion. Meanwhile, speaking on the occasion, vice-chancellor KMU Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that the inauguration of this center is a great initiative for the residents of Hayatabad and its surrounding areas which would help the local population to be vaccinated against 12 diseases in a calm and clean academic environment. He hoped that the establishment of this center would not only enhance the coverage of EPI in the area but would also provide local scientific evidence about the diseases which are being researched along with the causes, recommendations can also be made for the prevention of these diseases. Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq said that besides more than 1.6 million diagnostic tests in the Public Health Reference Lab and about 100,000 vaccinations at the Corona Mass Vaccination Center, now with the establishment of EPI center it is evident that KMU is in the forefront in serving the people of the country and especially the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in social services besides academic and research activities.

# Anti-Dengue awareness campaign launched



### ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Under the joint arrangements of Dis-

trict Administration and District Education Authority, an anti dengue awareness seminar was held at Iqbal hall of Metropolitan Corpo-

ration. Deputy Commissioner Lt. (R) Sohail Ashraf was chief guest on this occasion. Addressing the seminar Deputy Commissioner said that although the district administration and the health authority were taking all necessary steps to control the spread of dengue but the lesson to adopt precautionary measures on regular base is utmost necessary for long term. He asked the teachers to play the role of leaders in the schools by educating and training the students on modern lines and sensitive them to convey the message to protect from dengue and spread awareness against dengue from home to the streets and

achieve the desired results through joint efforts. The Deputy Commissioner said that special attention should be paid to cleanliness inside and outside schools, houses, offices so that dengue does not get a chance to spread. He appreciated the successful organization of the seminar and appealed the citizen that precautionary measures should be adopted. AC City Sahibzada Muhammad Yousaf, CEOs Eduactaion and Health Ali Ahmad Siyan, Dr. Bilal Ahmad also spoke the seminar. Chief Officer MPC Zubair Hussain, in charge DEOC Muhammad Sadiq, Educationalist Akhtar Butt and teachers were also present.

## Kyrgyz envoy calls on Acting Governor of Sindh

KARACHI: Acting Governor of Sindh Agha Siraj Durrani met Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Totuiev Ulanbek Asankulovich at Sindh Governor House here on Wednesday. Issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields were discussed during the meeting, said a statement. Appreciating Kyrgyzstan's assistance in various fields, the Acting Governor Sindh said that Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan had friendly relations, while improvement in strategic relations between the two countries had further strengthened the close ties between the two sides. - APP

# Call for protecting rights of working women in factories

### OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Representatives of a civil society organization called for protecting the rights of working women in factories and business premises, stressing the need to strict implementation of all relevant laws/regulations in this regard. Speakers while expressing views during an introductory session about Working Women's Alliance (WWA), an initiative of non-profit organization, Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA), and Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in collaboration with Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), here at the chamber's house on Wednesday, said the women have pivotal role in economic development of the country. The session was chaired by the chamber's president Hasnain Khurshid Ah-

mad while Ms Naheed, a representative of TDEA acted as moderator on the occasion. Senior members of the chamber, officials of TDEA/FAFEN, government relevant officials, traders, industrialists, women social activists, representatives of a non-government organisation, members of working women alliance and others were present during the introductory session. Ms Naheed through her multimedia presentation elaborated key terms of references (TORs) regarding working women's constitutional and fundamental rights that were set during a dialogue at the national level. She sought the SCCI cooperation for further modification and improvement in these TORs. Stressing the need for full enforcement of relevant laws and regulations regarding women rights, Hasnain Khurshid told the forum that rights and all required facil-

ities to working women in factories have been assured. The SCCI chief said factory owners are fully abiding with labour laws and ensuring rights of all employees, workers, especially female employees/workers and those working on daily wages in factories. He informed us that the minimum wages, announced by the provincial government, have been strictly implemented by factory owners. Farhad Asfandyar, a member of the women alliance, said the forum actively engaged relevant stakeholders to ensure provision of all rights to working women in the province. He said women rights have been protected in factories at every level. Dr Riffat Aziz, Sajjad Aziz, SCCI's secretary general and others also spoke on the occasion and reaffirmed their commitment to work jointly for rights of working women.

# Biochar can improve agri productivity, address ailment issues: Experts

Dean Faculty of Animal Husbandry Prof Dr Qamar Bilal said that the country needed a serious intervention to combat environmental, soil and water degradation with proper remediation

FAISALABAD: Application of biochar could not only address human ailment issues but also improve soil and crop health in addition to increase agricultural productivity. This was stated by the experts while addressing an international seminar on "Biochar Impact on Soil, Crop, Human Health and Society (A Gastroenteritis Context)" at Syndicate Hall University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that as per international standards, permissible limit of heavy metals was 10 parts per billion (ppb), but unfortunately

levels of heavy metals and pathogens in the water resources of the country were alarmingly high. He was of the view that biomaterials science, especially applications of biochar and low cost organic amendments etc. were essential to provide solutions for environmental issues and to lower down the heavy metals impact from the crops. Dean Faculty of Agriculture Prof Dr Aman Ullah Malik said that for sustainable agriculture, biochar could be used to help combat global warming by sequestering carbon in the soil. He said that this international

seminar provided a unique opportunity for the scientists, practitioners, and all other stakeholders to work together for the cause of food security and health issues as well as to learn from experiences of UK-based partners of GAST-ROPAK project. Dean Faculty of Animal Husbandry Prof Dr Qamar Bilal said that the country needed a serious intervention to combat environmental, soil and water degradation with proper remediation. He stressed the need of joint efforts in order to address gastroenteritis issues. He said that animal waste caused contami-

nation. Therefore, the experts, scientists and all policy makers should take this issue seriously for its durable solution. Chairman Department of Agronomy Prof Dr Abdul Khaliq said that management of soil variability would ensure sustainable agricultural production. He stressed the need to save soil and water wisely as the situation was deteriorating especially in poor peri urban areas. Dr Chris Quince and Richard Doyle from Earlham Institute, Dr Ruben Sakrabani of Cranfield University, Dr Lyla, Dr Noel McCarthy from Trinity College Dublin and others also spoke on the occasion. - APP

## Another police inspector shot dead

PESHAWAR: A police inspector of Frontier Region Police (FRP) was shot dead by unknown assailants in Saddar Circle area of police station Inqilab Road here on Wednesday. According to CCPO Office, the martyred police inspector, Sahar Gul was taking his children to school when came under the attack. His children however remained unhurt in the firing. SSP Operations, Haroon Rashid accompanied by SSP Investigation Shahzada Kokab Farooq reached the crime scene and started the investigation procedure. The SSP Operations directed the police force to carry out the investigation on scientific lines to arrest the real perpetrators behind this gruesome incident on urgent basis. He also directed for examining the crime scene evidence with minute details and ordered utilizing the human intelligence and statements of eye witnesses. He said perpetrators involved in this heinous act would be brought to the justice at all cost. A week ago, the Station House Officer (SHO) of Shahpur police station, Shakeel Khan was also martyred by unknown attackers on Northern By-pass road near Motorway. - APP

## ANF seizes huge quantity of drugs

KARACHI: The Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Sindh in a drive against anti social elements seized a huge quantity of drugs and arrested an accused in separate actions. According to a spokesman for ANF Sindh on Wednesday, ANF Police Station Korangi intercepted various parcels at the offices of private courier companies and recovered heroin and suspicious material booked for abroad. From three separate parcels booked for UK, about 280 grams of heroin concealed in 3 ladies suits, 850 grams of heroin concealed in 10 pairs of gloves and 700 grams heroin concealed tactfully in ladies suits were recovered. While from another parcel booked for Australia 14.600 grams of suspicious material, tactfully absorbed in 11 books, was recovered. - APP

## Shah for convening conference on climate change

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshheed Ahmed Shah on Wednesday underlined the need for convening a conference on important national issues like climate change and water scarcity aimed at devising an effective strategy to tackle the confronted challenges. Responding to a Calling Attention Notice regarding the shortage of water in Cholistan, he said there was a drought-like situation, the area had faced in 1910 and the shortage of water supply would further deteriorate the situation. Currently, the water in and out-flow at almost all dams had considerably decreased and even the Mangla dam reached below its dead level, declaring it 'dangerous' having a negative impact on the national economy. The minister said the climate change was badly affecting the country as in August there would be excessive water due to melting of snow in mountains, advising the Ministry of Climate change to work on war-footing and suggest corrected measures for the agriculture sector for effective utilization of water. Answering a supplementary question, Khurshheed Shah also stressed the need for judicious utilization of underground water for irrigation purposes, adding at present there was around 45-47 per cent water shortage. He said the country had sufficient water but there was a need for better management by increasing its storage capacity with the construction of new dams. He was of the view that there should be more dams in the next 4-5 years to preserve the water that went to the sea unutilized. - APP

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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
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Jordanian Ambassador visits FPCCI capital office

Ambassador says Jordan has strong and historic relations with Pakistan based on mutual respect and common values

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Jordanian Ambassador to Pakistan Ibrahim Al-Madani visited FPCCI Capital Office Islamabad yesterday and met Vice President Umar Masood-ur-Rehman and Chairman Coordination Mirza Abdul Rehman and discussed Bilateral trade and various issues including investment promotion.



The ambassador said that Pakistani products that can be exported to Jordan include fabrics, garments and agricultural seeds, machinery and spare parts, oil, juice, cotton, fiber optics, paper, leather and many more.

Jordanian investors should take full advantage of these opportunities. Former President of Islamabad Small Chamber and Convener of FPCCI Standing Committee on Real Estate Tahir Arain, President of Haripur Chamber Muhammad Saleem Awan, Vice President Malik Umair Khalid and Group Leader of Islamabad Chamber Abid Khan and others were also present on the occasion.

65 vehicles, 52 motorcycles recovered by AVL

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Interior Abdul Rehman Khan Kanju on Wednesday informed the National Assembly that during the current year about 65 vehicles and 52 motorcycles were recovered by Anti-Vehicle Lifting Cell (AVLC) till-date in the federal capital and handed over to real owners.



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Chef presents a Turkish delicacy to the wife of the Turkish Ambassador on the occasion of Turkish cuisine week, celebrated at the embassy.

Telenor, LUMS management consider synergies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Staying true to their mission, Telenor Pakistan leadership met with senior officials from LUMS to strengthen linkages between the private and academic sectors.

ventions that enhance the end-user experience with an eye on scaling technology. Irfan Wahab Khan said, "Telenor Pakistan and LUMS share the ambition to create a stronger, more resilient digital society that thrives on inclusion. Collaboration between the industry and academia, such as applied research and data science, is key to pushing business innovation.

ANF recovers 516 kg drugs

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Balochistan and ANF Intelligence on Wednesday recovered 516 kg narcotics. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF Balochistan and ANF Intelligence in a joint operation seized 516 kg narcotics including 410 kg opium and 106 kg heroin which were smuggled from Afghanistan and concealed in Gali Harbi, an area of Gulistan Tehsil of Qilla Abdullah to send abroad through Gawadar. A case has been registered against the accused.

AIOU starts English access micro scholarship program

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has inaugurated English Access Micro Scholarship Program in Gujranwala Region in collaboration with US Consulate. The purpose of this initiative is to provide youngsters (aged 13 to 19) access to education and employment opportunities through language teaching.

Fragile economy cannot afford political turmoil

Malik urged political parties to demonstrate best prudence and exhibit the highest degree of wisdom to iron out the differences as unrest had wreaked havoc in all economic fronts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President, Iftikhar Ali Malik cautioned Wednesday that country's fragile economy was not in position to bear the brunt of prolonged political turmoil at this crucial juncture of time.

said while talking to a delegation of young educated progressive women led by an emerging Utuber Ms Noreen Asim Siyal. Malik said, Pakistan was among a few countries where political instability had badly damaged the economic growth despite having plenty of indigenous resources.



dence and exhibit the highest degree of wisdom to iron out the differences as unrest had wreaked havoc in all economic fronts. He said that politics of confrontation, protest, violence and agitation was not solution to issues adding time has changed now and the influential nations were paying more attention to financial warfare to continue their dominance.

kistan's economy was not strong enough to withstand economic terrorism. Iftikhar Ali Malik highlighted the importance of enhancing exports by reducing cost of doing business to make country's products competitive in the world markets.

IHRA to start efforts against antimicrobial resistance

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA), and DAI - Fleming Fund Country Grant Pakistan have decided to start joint efforts against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in this regard between IHRA and Fleming Fund to combat Antimicrobial Resistance. This MOU will allow interventions in five public and private hospitals in Islamabad. The healthcare professionals and administrators of the selected hospitals will be trained in AMR concepts and the importance of AMR stewardship.

Five more diagnosed with virus

RAWALPINDI: Five more people were diagnosed with fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the district's tally of confirmed cases to 46,604. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here on Wednesday, the total infected cases included 43,098 from Rawalpindi and 3,506 from other districts. Among the news cases, three had arrived from the Taxila area and two from Rawal town. "Presently, 33 confirmed patients are quarantined at homes and no one at health facilities", the report added. The report further said that 6,876,248 people, including 44,790 health workers, had jabbed themselves against the lethal coronavirus (COVID-19) across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10, 2021. District Health Authority updated that during the last 24 hours, 1,020 samples were collected, out of which 1,015 were declared negative, while the positivity rate was recorded at 0.49 percent.

RDA vets 2022-23 budget worth Rs 2,287 mln

RAWALPINDI: The Finance Sub-Committee of Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on Wednesday vetted the fiscal year 2022-23 budget worth Rs 2,287 million and estimates of the development expenditure have been sent to the government of Punjab for endorsement. The Finance Sub-Committee comprising Finance Department, P&D Department and HUD&PHE Department met under the chairmanship of Director General, RDA, Capt. (R) Tahir Zafar Abbasi to scrutinize/vet the annual budget of RDA for fiscal year 2022-23. The meeting was informed that total outlay of RDA's budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 is Rs 2,287 million. The major portion of the budget allocated for the ongoing and new development schemes. The ongoing development schemes included construction of Rawalpindi Ring Road (38.3 km) main carriageway from Banth (N-5) to Thalian (M-2) and provision of LED street lights for Ward 1 to Ward 6 of CCB, UC-42, UC-75 and UC-78, Rawalpindi.

## Briefs

## Flight operations may affect due to road closures

ISLAMABAD: A spokesman for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Wednesday feared that the flight operations of the national flag carrier could affect due to road closures in Islamabad and Lahore. Spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan, in a brief press statement, said the PIA's all routine flights were in line with their schedule; however, there could be some delays because of unavoidable reasons [Road closures caused by PTI's long march towards Islamabad.] He requested all passengers to leave their homes for their respective airports, keeping in view the situation at roads, and remain in contact with PIA Call Center 111786786 for information about flights. - APP

## 'Govt will not allow anyone to challenge state writ'

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) Tahira Aurangzeb Wednesday said that government will never allow anyone to challenge writ of the state as protection of lives and property of people is responsibility of government and these cannot be compromised. Speaking to PTV news, she lamented that PTI leadership was leading the country toward anarchy, adding, the party was planning to attack law enforcement agencies. "There is freedom of expression and peaceful protests in the country but the PTI coming to Islamabad only aim for chaos," she added. Replying to a question, she made it clear that law will take its due course if the march goes violent. Imran Khan has snatched away basic rights of common people and did not give anything to the masses except price hike, she said. - APP

## Pak earns \$562m by exporting transport services

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$ 562.750 million by providing different transport services in various countries during the first nine months of fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period last year. This shows increase of 27.32 percent as compared to US \$ 441.980 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of last fiscal year (2020-21), Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. During the period under review, the exports of sea transport services witnessed an increase of 52.87 percent, by going up from US \$ 61.260 million last year to US \$ 93.650 million during the period under review.

Among the sea transport services, the exports of freight services surge by 104.56 percent from US \$26.520 million last year to US \$ 54.250 million whereas the exports of other sea transport services also rose by 13.41 percent from US \$34.740 million to US \$39.400 million current year, the PBS data revealed. The exports of air transport services increased by 26.07 percent by going up from US \$ 358.390 million last year to US \$451.820 million during July-March (2021-22).

Among the air transport services, the exports of passengers services rose by 22.64 percent, from US \$ 236.84 million to US \$ 290.460 million, whereas the exports of freight services dipped by 0.64 percent, from US \$23.260 million to US \$ 23.260 million, in addition the export of other air transport services surge by 40.72 percent from US \$ 98.140 million to US \$ 138.100 million. Meanwhile, the exports of road transport services during the period under review witnessed a decline of 24.51 percent by going down from US \$ 14.810 million to US \$ 11.180 million during this year, it added. Among the road transport services, the exports of freight services decreased by 74.95 percent, from US \$11.060 million to US \$ 2.770 million during the fiscal year under review, while the export of postal and courier services also decreased by 18.88 percent, from US \$7.520 million to US \$6.100m, the data revealed. - APP



ISLAMABAD: People facing problems in reaching their work places due to road closure because of PTI long march. - DNA

## Rule of law to be ensured at all costs, Senate told

Tarar said that on intercepting three vehicles in Lahore, a large number of ammunition including 16 automatic weapons have been recovered. He made it clear that the govt will not allow any armed group to plan attack on federal capital

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in the Senate, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday said that no one would be allowed to interrupt the daily life of people and the rule of law would be ensured at all costs. Replying to a point of order in the Senate, Tarar said that there would be no compromise on the writ of the state and appealed everyone to respect supremacy of law and constitution. He said that the affairs of the state run under certain rules and laws and it was moral and constitutional obligation of every citizen to avoid creating unrest in the country. He appealed the parliamentarians from Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to follow rule

of law in the country and avoid becoming part of unlawful activities. Tarar said that on intercepting three vehicles in Lahore, a large number of ammunition including 16 automatic weapons have been recovered. He made it clear that the government will not allow any armed group to plan attack on federal capital. He added the government of Punjab has also started investigation into killing incident of policeman in Lahore, who was on duty. He made it clear that a fake case was filed against Rana Sanauallah on Model Town incident and added that the Anti-Terrorist Court and Lahore High Court has cleared him from all such charges.

He said that Senator Ejaz Chaudhry has been released and assured the house that no any action will be taken against parliamentarians. He said that there are clear directions in this regard from the government. Senate Chairman Sadiq Sanjani informed the House that there was no need to issue a production order for Senator Ejaz Chaudhry as he has been released. Senator Mohammad Humayun Mohmand said that PTI parliamentarians, leaders and workers were being arrested without any reason. He said that the government should stop arresting innocent people. Senator Danesh Kumar said that the chairman Senate should give ruling on arrest of parliamentarians to

stop this practice. He added the government should avoid arresting parliamentarians. He appreciated the immediate response of Leader of the House and the government for taking notice of arrest of Senator Ejaz Chaudhry and release him instantly. Senator Dost Muhammad Khan said that previous long-march of PTI were held peacefully and assured that this long-march will also be held in a peaceful manner. Senator Fida Muhammad said that rather discussing personal issues the House should discuss issues of citizens of the country. He said that it was the constitutional right of every citizen to agitate against government policies. - APP

## Capital's hospitals make special arrangements

ISLAMABAD: All major public sector hospitals in the federal capital have made special arrangements to ensure uninterrupted medical services to the citizens. The federal capital's two major hospitals- Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and Federal Government Polyclinic (FGPC) will remain on high alert, keeping in view the situation. According to an official of the PIMS hospital, all heads of Departments have been directed to make necessary arrangements in this regard to cope with any emergency situation. All heads of Clinical Departments have also been directed to make

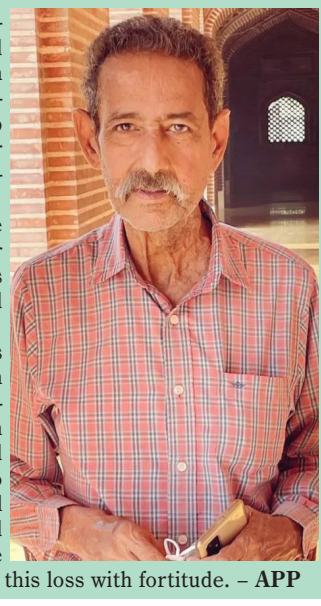
ensure their availability and presence at local stations of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and no one will be allowed to leave the station without prior approval of the Dean/CEO, PIMS during the long march. The Clinical Head of the departments has been asked to prepare an emergency roster of the doctors concerned to perform emergency duties as well as first and second on-call senior doctors of departments including the General Surgery Department, General Medicine Department, Neuro Surgery Department, Orthopedic Department, Emergency and Accident Centre, Oral and Maxillo-

facial Surgery Department and Blood Bank. Similarly, FGPC hospital administration has directed all departments' heads, specialists, Medical Officers, Blood Bank officers, Deputy Chief Nursing Superintendent, Security Officers, and all technicians of stores not to leave the station and will remain accessible and available to reach the hospital immediately in case of any emergency. The blood bank Officer has been advised to keep reserves of blood in hand for at least 100 bags while the Transport Supervisor will keep all the ambulances along with drivers in a func-

tional and ready position. The DED of Medical stores will ensure sufficient medical store supply in the Casualty Wards while the DED General Stores will ensure the availability of sufficient store items in the emergency and other wards. The Incharge Oxygen will ensure sufficient stock of gases and remain available in the hospital. The Incharge Emergency Department has been asked to stay on high alert the Emergency Department to meet any emergency situation besides reserving 20 beds (10 male and 10 female) in the emergency department.

## Marriyum grieved over demise of senior journalist Talat Aslam

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of senior journalist Talat Aslam. In her condolence message, the minister said Talat Aslam was a very kind, jovial and sincere person. Talat Aslam's services in the field of journalism will always be remembered, said Marriyum Aurangzeb. She prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude. - APP



## PIA likely to resumes flights on Islamabad-Xian

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) is likely to resume its commercial passenger flights on Islamabad-Xian-Beijing-Islamabad route from June 04, PIA Country Director Qadir Bux Sangi said on Wednesday. The national flag carrier has got permission from the relevant authorities to operate its commercial passenger flight for Xian on June 04, he told APP. In the last week meeting between Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, the two sides agreed on resumption of direct flights between China and Pakistan operated by Pakistan International Airlines as soon as possible. They also agreed on the increase direct flights between the two countries according to the development of the epidemic. PIA suspended its flight operation between Pakistan and China after December 18 last year after closure of Xian airport following the Covid-19 pandemic prevention and control measures imposed by the Chinese authorities. - APP

## IHRA to start efforts against antimicrobial resistance

*IHRA is an autonomous health regulatory body enacted under the Islamabad Health Regulation Act, 2018*

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA), and DAI - Fleming Fund Country Grant Pakistan have decided to start joint efforts against Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed in this regard between IHRA and Fleming Fund to

combat Antimicrobial Resistance. This MOU will allow interventions in five public and private hospitals in Islamabad. The healthcare professionals and administrators of the selected hospitals will be trained in AMR concepts and the importance of AMR stewardship. Antibiotic use in Pakistan has increased by 65% over the last 16 years. The misuse and overuse of antimicrobials by health practitioners has increased resistance in humans, which has resulted in severe illness and even death. According to the World Bank, by 2050, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) may lead to 10 million deaths annually. There is a wide practice of

health practitioners prescribing generic, broad spread antibiotics without checking if it is the appropriate solution for their patients. Around 75% of Pakistani patients are receiving at least one antimicrobial agent in a hospital setting. The Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) is an autonomous health regulatory body enacted under the Islamabad Health Regulation Act, 2018. IHRA aims to improve the quality, efficiency and safety of healthcare services delivery by adopting evidence-based regulatory standards for the registration and licensing of healthcare establishments, health professionals, and equipment. - APP

## Radioactive material cause serious health hazards

Umar Masood emphasized on creation of awareness about the sources of radioactive radiation, particularly in the business circle

ISLAMABAD: Vice President, Federation Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Umar Masood-ur-Rehman on Wednesday said that radioactive material can cause serious health hazards as well as environmental concerns. The major source of radioactive material is found in the scrap metal which is recycled in the industry, this was stated by Umar Masood-ur-Rehman, Vice President FPCCI in a meeting with the team of Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority (PNRA) led by Muhammad Rahman, Member Executive, said in a press release issued by FPCCI here.

Muhammad Qayyum DG (Inspection and Enforcement), Safer Hussain Head of PPSD, Anayat Ullah, and Syed Majid Hussain Shah Principal Scientific Officers were in the delegation. Umar Masood emphasized on creation of awareness about the sources of radioactive radiation, particularly in the business circle. The detection of radioactive



sources in the imported scrap consignment is an important function of PNRA, he said. Since the country of origin may cause a financial loss in case of detection of any radioactive source in the consignee's importing country, he urged a unifying and harmonizing the inspection and monitoring strategies and methods in the context of scrap metal. The team of PNRA gave a detailed presentation during the meeting and answered various

questions raised by the participants. Muhammad Rehman, Member Executive PNRA urged FPCCI to collaborate with PNRA for enhancing awareness and to control the chances of any radioactive activity in industrial units to ensure the production of radioactive source free products and commodities. The Vice President of FPCCI assured the team of PNRA of support and cooperation and suggested holding sessions in other regional offices of FPCCI in Peshawar, Lahore, Quetta, and Karachi to educate and sensitize the business community about the preventive measures against radioactive contamination. - APP

## PM grieves over death of journalist Talat Aslam

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed grief over the death of veteran journalist Talat Aslam. The prime minister paid tribute to the late journalist for his services to the press freedom and for raising awareness about the rights of minorities and women. He extended condolences to the bereaved family of Talat Aslam. - APP

## CDNS achieves Rs 990b through fresh bonds

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) on Wednesday achieved the target of issuing Rs 990 billion fresh bonds in the last 10 months of current fiscal year 2021-22 from July 1st to May 24th. The CDNS had set an annual gross receipt target of Rs 980 billion from July 1 to June 30 of the previous fiscal year 2020-21 to promote savings in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP here.

The senior official said the CDNS had set Rs 250 billion annual collection target from July 1 to June 30 for the year 2020-2021 as compared to Rs 352 billion for the previous year (2019-20) for the same time span to enhance savings in the country. The CDNS had set Rs 352 billion annual collection target for the year 2019-20 as compared to Rs 350 billion for the previous year (2018-19), he said.

Replying to a question, he said the CDNS has decided to start Islamic finance and will start implementing its procedural work from next month to provide the facility of Islamic finance in the institution. In this regard, under Islamic Sharia Compliance, Prize Bonds and Savings Certificates will be issued for investment in accordance with Sharia Principles, he said. The CDNS will provide Islamic investment opportunities to its consumers in an institution like the rest of the private and public sector banking, where Islamic sharia business has now reached 20 percent.

Replying to another question, the senior official said that (CDNS) has started working to increase new investment opportunities and promote digital investment through many new projects. The CDNS in collaboration with State Bank of Pakistan is developing digital Prize Bonds, which will be available through online electronic channels, he said. He said the CDNS is in process of launching its first Mobile App for online purchase and encashment of National Savings Schemes. The official said that for better and efficient transfer of funds electronically, the CDNS is going to adopt RAAST in the current month for speedy flow of funds through its financial tributaries, he said. - APP

## ITP issues traffic plan amid PTI's long March

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) on Wednesday issued a traffic plan on the convenience of the general public ahead of PTI's long march towards the federal capital. The entry and exit points to the Red Zone have been closed at 'Ayub chowk', 'NADRA chowk', 'Express chowk', and 'Serena chowk'. Those who wish to enter or exit the Red Zone can only use Margalla roads.

Ataturk Avenue has been closed from Nazim ud Din T-Cross to Geo Chowk, advising the commuters to use 7th Avenue to reach their destinations. Nazim ud Din Road has been closed from Zoom petrol pump to Ataturk Avenue and the Jinnah Avenue has been blocked from China Chowk to Express Chowk, the commuters are advised to use Margallah Road as an alternative route. Murree Road is blocked for both sides of traffic towards Faizabad from Rawalpindi, the commuters can use Islamabad Expressway as an alternative route. Islamabad Expressway has been closed for incoming traffic to Islamabad at the Gulberg Green Bridge and the commuters are advised to use Rawalpindi-Peshawar road to reach their destination. - APP

## UK's Afghan evacuation: a disaster

THE excoriating parliamentary report on Britain's handling of the withdrawal from Afghanistan is such a lengthy catalogue of failure that it is far quicker to say what was done well: there were heroic efforts by individuals, working under enormous pressure, to save lives. Unfortunately, as the inquiry by the Commons foreign affairs committee – chaired by the Conservative MP Tom Tugendhat – makes clear, they were utterly let down by both ministers and top officials.

Politicians and senior officials showed too little interest, were absent at key moments, took inadequate or misguided action and failed to record what they did. MPs found that the “chaotic and arbitrary” Foreign Office response probably cost hundreds of people their chance to leave, and thus is likely to have cost lives. Yet those who are to blame have utterly failed to take responsibility. Indeed, when challenged, the Foreign Office provided answers that “in our judgment, are at best intentionally evasive, and often deliberately misleading”.

The chaos in the days before and after the fall of Kabul to the Taliban on 15 August 2021 looked appalling enough at the time. The detail provided by Foreign Office whistleblowers and others shows it was worse. The government should have begun planning when the US withdrawal was announced in February 2020, instead of simply hoping the US might change course. What action it did take was late, inadequate and often incompetent.

Dominic Raab, then foreign secretary, had a single one-to-one conversation with the British ambassador in Kabul in the two weeks before the city fell, as the Taliban advance accelerated. He – like the prime minister, the minister for Afghanistan, Lord Ahmad, and the Foreign Office's permanent secretary, Sir Philip Barton – were still on holiday on 15 August.

Beyond holding those who failed accountable, three issues are paramount. First, as the human rights group Global Witness says, the failure continues: people are still waiting for visas and the criteria have been tightened to bar some of those originally told that they had valid claims. Second, those who have made it to the UK must be properly supported to make their home here; thousands of Afghans remain in temporary accommodation. Finally, Afghanistan is in desperate straits. Development as well as humanitarian aid is necessary, along with serious consideration of how to get the economy back on to its feet. Britain has failed Afghans appallingly. It must not continue to do so.

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

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



## A refreshing change in Australia

AUSTRALIA has sworn in a new prime minister. Anthony Albanese surprised political pundits as he led Labor to victory in the Australian general election. This was the Labor Party's first election victory in close to a decade. Albanese, a seasoned political leader, promised voters “safe change” during the campaign, which he ran efficiently. Voters echoed the positive messaging and showed the door to Australia's conservative Liberal-National coalition, which has been in power since 2013. “I want to bring Australians together. I want to seek our common purpose and promote unity and optimism, not fear and division,” Albanese said in his victory speech.

These elections, coming as they do, after the pandemic, were also seen as a referendum on the style of the former prime minister, Scott Morrison. Dubbed a ‘bulldozer’ by media for his hard decisions during the pandemic, Morrison didn't always follow a collaborative political approach. Albanese, on the other hand, has a reputation of being a ‘builder’. Though he has adjusted some of his more left-leaning policies, most voters seem to embrace his positions on key issues like climate. Labor will however need the support of Greens and other cross-benchers to pass its legislation in the Australian Senate.

As one of the most important issues of the election, climate crisis was a major talking point for Labor. The new prime minister is expected to take greater and faster action on climate change. Labor has already promised to cut emissions by 43 per cent (by 2030) and to reach net zero by 2050 by strengthening the mechanism used to persuade companies to make cuts. Critics would want Albanese to do more to keep global temperature rise within 1.5 degrees Celsius, as outlined in the Paris Agreement. Australia's foreign relations will be another major focus area for the new prime minister. Just 24 hours after taking oath, Albanese flew down to Japan to attend the Quad Summit in Tokyo. Sitting together with the world leaders, including President Joe Biden, Albanese discussed climate change, and the challenges faced by the Indo-Pacific region. He is holding individual bilateral meetings with Biden, Narendra Modi and Fumio Kishida.

With a full plate in front of him – from reinventing the country's vital manufacturing industry to holding a referendum on enshrining an Indigenous Voice to Parliament in the constitution – Albanese needs to hit the ground running. It appears that he has already taken the first sprint.

## Palestinians denied justice in Israeli courts

Yossi Mekelberg

The actual act of driving so many families from their homes, of making them homeless in order to allow the army that occupies their land to train, arguably in order to improve its ability to violate their human, civil and political rights, is shockingly ironic

ONCE upon a time, there were courts in Israel where Palestinians could, at least occasionally, obtain some of the justice denied to them by the might of the occupation and have their rights protected. But after 55 years of living under occupation, Palestinians have learned that it is increasingly futile for them to look for fair treatment – or to be treated in line with international law and standards, let alone compassion – in their daily dealings with Israel's military and civil authorities in the West Bank and Gaza. There were occasions when the High Court of Justice was the last bastion of mitigating the arbitrary nature of the occupation: an occupation that by its sheer military power continues to deprive Palestinians of their basic rights and impose on them every kind of restriction that suits it. However, last week, once again, the High Court – this former fortress of human rights – approved the eviction of up to 1,200 Palestinians from their homes in eight villages in the southern West Bank area of Masafa Yatta, allowing Israel to reassign it as a closed military zone for training purposes. The actual act of driving so many families from their homes, of making them homeless in order to allow the

army that occupies their land to train, arguably in order to improve its ability to violate their human, civil and political rights, is shockingly ironic. It beggars belief that the highest court in the country has not even nudged the state to apply a drop of common sense and humanity and support the Palestinian petitioners whose sole wish was to remain on the land where they have been living since at least the beginning of the 20th century.

Those who want to see the people of Masafa Yatta driven somewhere else would have the court believe that the Palestinians living there have embarked on an unlawful building spree. The reality is very different, as in this part of the South Hebron Hills the people the Israeli courts have almost certainly condemned to expulsion are mainly traditional cave-dwellers who built some makeshift structures and tents for public services, including a medical center, schools and mosques. None of these buildings are as fancy as those in the prosperous Jewish settlements that have come to be scattered across the West Bank and which benefit from huge government subsidies.

It is for the court to ask itself why it approved the mass eviction of people who pose no threat to anyone and condemn them to a state of destitution. Can the “most moral army in the world” not train anywhere else? Does it need to make the lives of some of the poorest people in the West Bank utterly miserable and stoke up even more anger among the rest of the population? After all, the hamlets of Masafa Yatta are in Area C, which comprises 60 percent of the West Bank and is where, under the Oslo Accords, Israel retains almost exclusive control over security, law enforcement, planning and construction. In this case, the occupying force is responsible for the security and well-being of all the people who live there. But Israel has instead chosen to contravene international law and establish in this area a population of at least 325,000 Jewish settlers in 125 settlements and about 100 outposts, which enjoy excessive investment in their infrastructure and security that amounts to more funding per capita than even Israelis inside the Green Line enjoy. At the same time, Palestinians find it almost impossible for their planning applications to be approved. So inevitably they build without permission to meet the needs of their growing population and to keep their communities functioning. What else can we expect them to do?

By now, when it comes to dealing with the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, the Israeli courts have become a

mere rubber stamp for the government, the security forces and the settlers' wishes. The courts in these cases are guided neither by international law nor by how they would have ruled in cases brought by Israeli citizens rather than Palestinians. On the one hand, judges are complicit in dodgy arrangements between the government and the settlers by which they legalize outposts built by settlers without government approval, in defiance of Israeli law and authorities. And on the other they show no compassion in allowing evictions of Palestinians and in so doing neglect their responsibility as the occupying power to ensure everyone's well-being, livelihood and, equally important, their dignity. It could be expected that, in a democratic system, courts would not whitewash the misdeeds of government. How can the highest court in the land feel comfortable with the fact that it is never Jewish settlers that are ordered to evacuate their homes and pave the way for the army to train? It must surely bother those who are in charge of upholding the law that, even though their ruling is in line with the law, it is one that intrinsically favors Israelis, as laws are enacted by their representatives, while the Palestinians have no representation in this legislative process or the power to contest laws that discriminate against them. Do not get me wrong, I am not suggesting that judges should bring their political opinions into their work. This would obviously destroy the very foundations of any justice system and further encourage politicians, not that they need much encouragement, to use their power to influence the selection of judges who will toe their own political line. However, there are times, despite the absence of a written constitution and especially when surrounded by the darkness of the occupation, when the justice system should be a beacon of light and have the courage to challenge the arbitrary nature of the two other branches of government should they abuse their powers in such an obvious and disturbing way. The case of Masafa Yatta demonstrates once again that by such actions – as well as by turning a blind eye to regulations and restrictions on the use of firearms in disregard of Palestinians lives, by allowing lengthy detentions of children without trial and by imprisoning nearly 2 million people in Gaza within a harsh blockade – the High Court of Justice has failed Palestinians time and again, demonstrating that there is one standard of justice and morality applied to Israelis and another to Palestinians.

– Courtesy: Arab News

## Texas shooting: America and its complex love affair with guns

Fawaz Turki

Guns were there at the dawn of American history when they were used by White Americans to subdue...

BEFORE Roberta Drury, the 32-year-old woman who was the youngest of the 10 black folks killed at the Buffalo supermarket two weeks ago, was laid to rest on Saturday, she received a final goodbye from friends and family at the stately brick Assumption Church in Syracuse, not far from where she had grown up in nearby Cicero, a small town of 32,000, whose name was assigned in 1790 by a clerk interested in the classics, honouring Cicero, the Roman statesman. The memorial service was both solemn and sad – as well it might have been. The racially motivated massacre in Buffalo was not the first nor, alas, will it be the last in the US this year – it just happens to be the 198th mass shooting of 2022. Last year ended with 611 and the year before with 417, which statistically bring the numbers to roughly 10 a week. Three weeks ago, a lone gunman in my own neighbourhood of Cleveland Park here in Washington wildly fired hundreds of shots from an assault rifle into the surrounding streets – before he fired one into his own head – but since no one, miraculously, was killed or seriously hurt, the incident received, save for the local media, barely a blip on the national radar.

We are talking here about a uniquely American phenomenon – namely, a people so consumed by their love of guns and so protective of their right to own them, that attempting to separate a gun enthusiast from his gun would be akin to separating a parent from his child. All of which raises this, well, loaded question: how to account for this phenomenon, one absent elsewhere in the Western world? Look, clinches aside, gun culture is as American as apple pie. It is at the heart of the American people's archetype, encoded in their habits of spirit and the workings of their quotidian lives as it is encoded in their Bill of Rights, where the Second Amendment (ratified in 1791) affirms that “the right of the people to keep and bear arms that shall not be abridged”.

No question then about the fact that Americans love owning and bearing guns. According to FBI records, nearly 40 million guns were purchased in 2020 alone – though it should be noted that attitudes about gun violence and gun ownership differ widely by race, ethnicity, class, educational background and community type. But one thing is clear: The US is so awash with guns

– Courtesy: Gulf News

## Washington did not dispel ASEAN's doubts

Ding Duo

At the summit, the US put forward cooperation initiatives for ASEAN in many fields, including climate change, clean energy and transportation infrastructure, space cooperation, digital economy development, people-to-people...

THE historic summit between the US and ASEAN took place recently in Washington. It was the first time the leaders of ASEAN member states were invited as collective guests of the US. Over the years, the US has continued to deepen its partnership with Southeast Asian countries. ASEAN is the fourth largest market in the world, and the US is ASEAN's largest source of foreign direct investment, with the bilateral trade volume exceeding \$360 billion in 2020. It cannot be denied that Washington still has a huge influence in the Southeast Asian region, although such influence has weakened over recent years. There are many reasons for this change. One of the important facts is the improvement of China's soft and hard power, especially its economic and technological strength. Another reason is that the US has adjusted its policy toward China and has led to an overall intensification of competition in many fields. Southeast Asian countries are becoming more cautious about getting involved in the game of great powers. Although the Biden administration proposed a new version of the Indo-Pacific strategy in February this year, this strategy still has obvious shortcomings in the economic field. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict and changes in the security situation in Europe have also affected Washington's strategy and resource investment in Southeast Asia. The economic agenda is one of the focal points. Washington believes that Beijing's strong economic influence in the region poses a serious challenge to its dominance, so it must strengthen economic ties with the region. It hopes to use the summit to further strengthen consultations with ASEAN countries on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework and win ASEAN's support. From China's view, the Biden administra-

tion has not shied away from looking at Southeast Asia from the perspective of US-China strategic competition, and the summit is full of hidden issues regarding Sino-US competition. The summit can be viewed as an important step for the US to implement its Indo-Pacific strategy. But Washington is trying to downplay the geopolitical overtones of the summit, as seen in White House briefings and speeches from Biden, Harris and Pelosi. The reason may be that the US needs to consider the feelings of ASEAN, and to highlight the openness and inclusiveness of the Indo-Pacific strategy. It is worth noting that, recently, Chinese officials and scholars have made extensive and persistent criticism of the US practice on inciting camp confrontation and establishing small groups around the world. Some ASEAN countries also expressed concern about the division of the international community and the resurgence of the Cold War mentality. Although Washington has repeatedly emphasized its support for ASEAN centrality, what the US has done in diplomatic practice is to maximize the instrumental value of ASEAN countries. Another noteworthy detail is that the US ambassador to ASEAN had been vacant for many years, and Biden did not hold separate bilateral meetings with ASEAN leaders at this summit. The US strengthens its alliances and builds small multilateral mechanisms in the region with QUAD and AUKUS as main pillars, which in fact weakens ASEAN's centrality in regional security affairs. Such an approach can hardly be regarded as a respect attitude for ASEAN. The starting point of it is not the common interests of Southeast Asia, but the strategic interests of Washington in reshaping China's surrounding environment. At the summit, the US put forward cooperation initiatives for ASEAN in many fields, including climate change, clean energy and transportation infrastructure, space cooperation, digital economy development, people-to-people and cultural exchanges and higher education, maritime and law enforcement, and medical cooperation. Behind this variety of cooperation projects is the relatively limited US investment in Southeast Asia. The \$150 million that Biden announced for ASEAN is far less than the amount of aid that the US Congress has planned for Ukraine. If it is averaged to ten ASEAN countries, the amount will be even more insufficient. For comparison, in the first four months of this year, the bilateral trade volume between China and ASEAN reached nearly 290 billion US dollars, a year-on-year increase of 9.4%. At present, the main concern facing ASEAN countries is still to achieve economic recovery and improve people's livelihood as soon as possible in the context of the epidemic. The above cooperation initiative undoubtedly outlines a promising prospect for the cooperation between the US and ASEAN, but it is also full of uncertainty as to what extent it can meet the practical needs of ASEAN countries in the short and medium term. In essence, this approach has not overcome the shortcomings of the US Indo-Pacific strategy, that is, it lacks a systematic and

pragmatic cooperation concept and feasible path in the economic field, and it is difficult to effectively connect with the development strategies of ASEAN countries. Among these initiatives, maritime and law enforcement, medical cooperation and higher education are mostly continuations and expansions of previous cooperation. Investment in smart infrastructure may be attractive to ASEAN countries, but in terms of improving infrastructure conditions, most ASEAN countries currently do not have the urgent need and economic guarantee to promote the development of smart infrastructure. It is worth noting that maritime cooperation is presented as a separate item in the list of outcomes and the joint statement. In this area, Washington announced \$60 million for a new regional maritime program, most of which will be led primarily by the US Coast Guard (USCG), including personnel and equipment deployment, combating IUU fishing, equipment assistance and staff training. This reflects that the United States takes this as a key concern and indicates that the US Coast Guard will be more involved in maritime security affairs in the South China Sea in the future. US maritime cooperation with ASEAN builds on US allies and partnerships in the region and has become a priority area of cooperation in recent years. During talks with ASEAN leaders, Harris also mentioned the importance of safeguarding freedom of navigation and international law. Considering that China and some countries have disputes over territorial sovereignty and maritime delimitation in the South China Sea, the US move also aims to contain China's activities in the South China Sea and win over other parties to the dispute. From next month, China, Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand will successively host the BRICS Summit, the Leaders' Meetings on East Asian Cooperation, the G20 Summit and the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting, ushering in an Asian moment for the global governance. For the past decades, the ASEAN-centered regional cooperation architecture has formed in East Asia, which is the key to maintaining peace and stability in the region. A week before the US-ASEAN summit, Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand issued a joint press communiqué, stressing that the international community should meet challenges in solidarity and develop in an open and inclusive manner. This conforms to the unanimous will of all countries in the world to oppose bloc confrontation and promote stability and prosperity together. The world today is confronted with a choice between solidarity and division, between cooperation and confrontation. The Cold War mentality will only undermine the global peace framework, and bloc confrontation will only exacerbate the security challenges of the 21st century. In this sense, no matter what regional strategy is proposed, the purpose should be mutual benefit and win-win results rather than a zero-sum game.

– Courtesy: China Daily





**Briefs**

**First-ever Pak-Japan Center inaugurated at NUST**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: The first-ever Pak-Japan Centre was inaugurated in Pakistan at National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The centre was inaugurated jointly by Lt Gen (Retd) Javed Mahmood Bukhari, Rector NUST, and Mitsuhiko Wada, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan. The facility has been established through the collaborative efforts of NUST and Plus W Inc. a Japanese company working on behalf of the Government of Japan. The event was also attended by the Ex-Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan, Imtiaz Ahmad, First Secretary Economic and Development Section Embassy of Japan in Islamabad Mr Tsuchiya Taiji, and Ms Ismat Hassan Sial, the Charge d' Affaires, Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo. The Center will primarily focus on promoting exchanges between Pakistan and Japan to foster cooperation in the fields of human resource development and joint research, especially in the IT sector. It will also facilitate Japanese and Pakistani companies in setting up businesses in each other's country by familiarising individuals with respective cultures, business principles and basics of language.

**Commerce Minister visits France to boost trade ties**



**DNA**  
PARIS: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar said that Pakistan enjoys historic friendly and cooperative relations with France and wishes to strengthen and diversify bilateral trade and economic linkages in the years to come. He was talking to Mr. Franck Riester, France's Minister for Foreign Trade and Attractiveness here. Charge d'Affaires Mr. Muhammad Amdad Aziz Qazi was also present during the meeting. The Minister said Pakistan-France trade has witnessed a steady growth in recent years. He emphasized that Pakistan's strategic location, fast developing infrastructure and liberal investment policies of the government make Pakistan an attractive destination for foreign investors. He said since its launch in 2014, the GSP Plus scheme has helped in creating an enabling environment for the implementation of 27 international conventions on human rights, labour rights, environment and good governance in beneficiary countries, besides increasing employment opportunities, especially for women and highlighted its importance for Pakistan's economy, particularly the export sector. Syed Naveed Qamar appreciated support of European member states especially France in securing the GSP Plus status in 2014 and hoped that the upcoming GSP Plus 2024 would further strengthen the mutually beneficial trade ties between Pakistan and the EU. Pakistan wishes to remain constructively engaged with the EU and its member states to further enhance our commercial relations and to cooperate in terms of protection and promotion of social, economic, and other rights of the people of Pakistan, he added. He mentioned that Pakistan's exports to France are dominated by the textile sector, and there is immense potential to diversify trade to other sectors such as agriculture, dairy, clean energy, digital economy and startups.

**Marriyam assures APNS of rates' increase, ads quantum**

Sarmad Ali, President and Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, Secretary General apprised the minister on the issues faced by the newspaper industry

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: Ms. Marium Aurangzeb, Federal Information Minister assured the APNS that the present government strongly believes in the freedom of expression and will safeguard freedom of press and address the problems faced by the print media. The Information Minister was speaking at the meeting of the Executive Committee of the APNS held at Islamabad wherein Mr. Sarmad Ali, President and Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, Secretary General apprised her on the issues faced by the newspaper industry. They stated that the 8th Wage Board had enhanced the wages of newspaper employees by minimum 146% and had recommended the federal government for increase in the advertisement rates of newspapers.

They regretted that the Federal Govt has not increased the rates which has resulted acute liquidity crunch for newspaper industry. They requested the federal government to enhance advertisement rates in proportion with the increase in inflation. They also briefed the Minister on the reduction in the quantum of print advertising and requested that the quantum of Govt ads in newspapers be increased



by 100% so that the newspaper industry could brave the crisis. The APNS office bearers also pointed out that the federal government has not cleared the long outstanding dues of newspapers pertaining to the periods 2008 to 2013, 2013 to 2018 and from 2018 onwards despite various assurances. They stated that during the previous tenure the APNS was assured that the WHT refunds of newspa-

pers will be released but despite reminders these have not been paid. The APNS also requested the government to exempt GST on imports of consumables of newspaper industry. Ms. Marium Aurangzeb assured the APNS Executive Committee that she fully supports and agrees with the APNS demands of enhancing the advertisement rates and increase in the quantum of government advertising. She assured that the long outstanding dues will be cleared as early as possible. She also stated that the issue of exemption of GST and refund of WHT will be taken up with the Finance Ministry. The meeting of the Executive Committee was also attended by Secretary Information, Shahira Shahid and Mr. Mubashar Hasa, the PIO and other officials of the Information Ministry.

**PAF trainer aircraft crashes**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: A trainer aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force crashed near Mianwali during a routine training mission, a statement issued by the PAF spokesperson said Wednesday. However, no loss of life or property occurred as the pilot ejected from the aircraft safely. "A PAF trainer aircraft has crashed near Mianwali during a routine training mission. Pilot ejected safely while no loss of life or property was reported on the ground," the statement said. It further stated that a Board of Inquiry has been ordered by Air Headquarters to determine the cause of the incident.

**MoFA celebrates Africa Day**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan extends its heartfelt felicitations to the people of Africa on the occasion of "Africa Day," marking the 59th anniversary of the African Union. This Day is a celebration of the African nations' heroic struggle against colonialism, racism, and apartheid, as well as the richness of their civilization and the gigantic strides they have made since achieving emancipation from colonial rule. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs commemorated the Day by organizing a virtual event in collaboration with the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI). Over 500 guests from 35 African countries attended the event, with representation from the African Union Commission and three Regional Economic Communities (RECs) namely the East Africa Community, the Economic Community of West African States and the Intergovernmental Authority for Development.

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari opened the proceedings with his keynote address. The Foreign Minister said Pakistan was proud of the political and diplomatic support it had extended to freedom movements of African nations in the past. He reiterated Pakistan's resolve to enhance its engagement with the African Continent, particularly in the economic and trade domains. The Foreign Minister stressed that the revitalization of diplomatic outreach to the African Continent was an important pillar of Pakistan "Engage Africa" initiative. Secretary General East Africa Community Dr. Peter Mathuki was the Special Guest of Honour on the occasion. In his remarks, Dr. Mathuki recalled the historic bonds of friendship between Pakistan and Africa. He appreciated Pakistan's diplomatic and economic support for African countries through the decades, making particular note of Pakistan's contributions to UN peacekeeping operations in Africa. Representing the Armed Forces of Pakistan, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Nadeem Raza, highlighted growing defence and counter-terrorism cooperation between Pakistan and African countries.

**IHC adjourns Sheikh Rasheed's plea**

**DNA**  
ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday asked former interior minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed to appear in person before the court on Thursday (Today) if he wants to seek protective bail. Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the case filed by Awami Muslim League (AML)'s leader. The petitioner's lawyer said that there was exemption of biometric for citizens of more than 70 year old. He said that his client couldn't reach the court as he was above 70. The chief justice remarked that the petitioner had been giving statements for a 'blood shedding revolution' but he didn't appear before court. The court said that the petitioner had to appear before court if he wanted to continue his case. The hearing of the case then adjourned till today. - APP

**Crisis-hit Sri Lanka appoints PM to helm finance ministry**

**DNA**  
COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was on Wednesday given the additional responsibility of running the finance ministry as the island nation grapples with its worst-ever economic crisis. The South Asian island nation has suffered months of dire shortages and anti-government protests, with importers unable to finance vital food, fuel and medicines. Wickremesinghe, 73, was sworn in as finance minister after two weeks of wrangling among coalition partners for the crucial position ahead of bailout talks with the International Monetary Fund. His appointment was delayed by a dispute between Wickremesinghe and the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) party of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa over who would take the post. "The president's party had wanted the finance portfolio, but the PM insisted he wanted it if he is to lead the country out of the economic chaos," a top politician involved in the negotiations told AFP, on condition of anonymity. Wickremesinghe is expected to soon unveil a revised budget promising relief for poorer Sri Lankans suffering through record inflation and spiralling food prices. Staff-level talks with the IMF concluded on Tuesday, but it is expected to take six more months for the Washington-based lender to agree on a bailout package, central bank officials said. - APP



ISLAMABAD: German Special Representative for Afghanistan & Pakistan Dr Jasper Wieck on his day-long visit calls on Foreign Secretary Sohail Mehmood. German Ambassador is also present on the occasion. - DNA

**Pakistan-Iran resolve to further strengthen health cooperation**

**STAFF REPORT**  
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Abdul Qadir Patel held a meeting with Dr. Bahram Einollahi, Minister of Health & Medical Education, Iran on the sidelines of World Health Assembly in Geneva. Minister said Pakistan and Iran enjoy long-standing brotherly relations. Both countries have commonality of views on global public health issues. Enhanced consultation and coordination would be useful, he said. Iran has carried out excellent reforms in the health sector specially in terms of improving health care services. Iran has done commendable work in extending health insurance coverage, he said. The situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates stepped up bilateral cooperation and exchange of views. Achieving international public health security remains a key objective. It will however face challenges of funding sources and priorities, he said. Pakistan believes that there is a need for enhanced international cooperation and assistance to strengthen national health systems and to ensure all people enjoy the basic right to health. Both dignitaries consider areas of cooperation including enhanced cross border cooperation for infectious diseases control, exchange of experts for technical assistance on Universal Health Coverage focusing on strengthening public health and primary health care delivery, Exchange of healthcare financing experts for lesson sharing and guidance for developing healthcare financing policies, cooperation in medical training and research, and assist medical professionals by granting fellowships from respective institutions and cooperation in developing mental health infrastructure and trainings regarding mental health services in outreach facilities. During the meeting it was highlighted that in the global health context, both countries should work closely with other EMRO Member States and WHO to ensure that realization of tangible measures to promote health remains at the forefront of the global development agenda. For this purpose it was agreed that respective Missions of both countries in Geneva may work closely especially on important matters like the upcoming negotiations on proposed pandemic treaty, International Health Regulations amendments, and sustainable finance of WHO. Pakistan has recently been selected as one of the recipients of mRNA technology. Once this arrangement matures, we would help expand vaccine supply to EMRO region and beyond, the Minister shared.

**Texas gun atrocity Biden channels personal losses to console families**

"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit,' So many crushed spirits"  
WASHINGTON: "To lose a child is like having a piece of your soul ripped away," said US President Joe Biden - a twice-be-reaved father channeling his own heartache to console a nation devastated by another mass shooting on Tuesday. Over his long years in public office, the 79-year-old Democrat has often spoken about the tragic death of his infant daughter. Naomi, aged one, died in a 1972 car crash, which also took the life of Biden's first wife Neilia. Biden has also publicly mourned the 2015 death of his eldest son Beau, taken by brain cancer at just 46 years old. But on Tuesday, he reached for those two instances of life-changing grief to comfort a new set of families whose lives have been torn asunder. Hours after a teenage gunman killed at least 19 young children at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, Biden stepped up to a presidential lectern in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. Like his successors, Biden was being called on to deliver remarks that would explain the inexplicable to Americans and to the world. But his thoughts, and his remarks quickly turned to a much narrower audience. "There are parents who will never see their child again, never have them jump in bed and cuddle with them. Parents who will never be the same," he said. "There's a hollowness in your chest, and you feel like you're being sucked into it and never going to be able to get out," he said, eyes occasionally flitting downward and his hands tightening. "It's suffocating. And it's never quite the same." When Biden has given speeches after such shootings - most recently after a racist massacre in Buffalo, New York - or after disasters, he has often reached for words of hope, as well as condolences. He has promised bereaved families that a day will come when their pain would ease, when the memory of a loved one will bring smiles and not just tears. But on Tuesday, he offered no such a horizon. Instead, this devoutly Catholic president turned to his wife of more than four decades, first lady Dr Jill Biden, and to a faith that has comforted him over the years. "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit," So many crushed spirits," he said. "So, tonight, I ask the nation to pray for them, to give the parents and siblings the strength in the darkness they feel right now." "Our prayer tonight is for those parents, lying in bed and trying to figure out, 'Will I be able to sleep again? What do I say to my other children? What happens tomorrow?'"

**FM Bilawal meets FMs of Saudi Arabia, Austria**

FM Bilawal underlined that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had historic and deep-rooted fraternal ties that stood the test of time. He appreciated consistent support of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan and its steadfast solidarity for the Kashmir cause

**DNA**  
DAVOS: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and his Saudi counterpart Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on Wednesday expressed the resolve to deepen mutual cooperation in all fields including economy, trade and investment as well as at multilateral fora. In a meeting held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, the two foreign ministers reviewed various aspects of bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest. Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar and Minister of Climate Change Sherry Rehman were also present during the meeting. The Foreign Minister paid tribute to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman for achieving new heights of progress

**NEWS DESK**  
DAVOS: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), on the sidelines of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, today. Minister of State Hina Rabbani Khar and Minister of Climate Change Sherry Rehman were also present during the meeting. The Foreign Minister and the Secretary General reviewed the status of Pakistan's cooperation with GCC and its member states. Recalling the historical linkages, geographical proximity and cultural affinities between Pakistan and the GCC, the Foreign Minister un-

derscored that Pakistan attached high importance to its fraternal relations with member states of the GCC, both bilaterally and in the context of the GCC. The Foreign Minister and the Secretary General agreed to explore further avenues for enhancing bilateral trade and economic ties between Pakistan and the GCC as well as to strengthen institutional linkages, in line with the Joint Action Plan for Strategic Dialogue. On Pakistan-GCC Free Trade Agreement (FTA), the two sides expressed determination to conclude the negotiations at the earliest possible. Pakistan and the GCC enjoy long-standing cordial relations. Pakistan's relations with the Member States of the GCC are rooted firmly in shared faith, values and culture.

and development of the Kingdom under their visionary leadership. Recalling their earlier interaction in Jeddah last month, the two foreign ministers expressed satisfaction over the excellent bilateral partnership between the two countries and resolved to strengthen this partnership to mutual benefit. FM Bilawal underlined that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had historic and deep-rooted fraternal ties that stood the test of time. He appreciated consistent support of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan and its steadfast solidarity for the Kashmir cause. Noting the commonality of views between the two sides on international issues, the two foreign ministers agreed to jointly explore avenues for improving collaboration and coordination amongst developing countries including through the OIC platform. Separately, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met his Austrian counterpart, Alexander Schallenberg on the sidelines of the Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.