



Islamabad POST

Friday, May 27, 2022

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Israel takes hostage US' foreign policy

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Briefs

Putin will not dictate peace terms

NEWS DESK

DAVOS: Russia will not win its war in Ukraine and President Vladimir Putin must not dictate the terms of any peace agreement, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Thursday. "Putin must not win his war, and I am convinced he will not win," Scholz said in a speech at the World Economic Forum in the Swiss resort of Davos. "A capture of the whole of Ukraine seems further away now than at the beginning of the war." Although some have suggested that Ukraine should negotiate with Putin and consider ceding territory, Scholz rejected the idea of letting Putin dictate the terms of an agreement.

PTI moved to politics of 'Goli'

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyam Aurangzeb on Thursday strongly condemned the firing by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on the camp office of PML-N MPA Bilal Tarar from Gujranwala. In a statement, the minister said that attempt on the life of the MPA was made on the orders of Imran Khan, but luckily Bilal Tarar was safe. Those who ruined the national economy, now had started killing their political opponents, she remarked. Castigating former PM, she said Imran who was begging for the security of the PM for himself, was trying to kill his opponents.

Bogus rulers guests for few days

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Parvez Elahi has strongly condemned the arrests and torture of MPA Mian Aslam Iqbal, his brother and several members of the Punjab Assembly and said that police violence against elected representatives is a matter of grave concern. The matter of the arrested members of the Punjab Assembly will be discussed in the House.

Petroleum prices up by Rs 30

Petrol's new price will be Rs 179.86; Miftah says govt to still bear losses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail announced Thursday a massive hike in the price of petroleum products after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) emphasised abolishing the subsidies on the commodities. In a press conference, the finance minister said the government has decided to hike the price of petrol, diesel, kerosene oil, and light diesel by Rs30, effectively from May 27.

New prices (per litre):

- Petrol — Rs179.86
- Diesel — Rs174.15
- Kerosene oil — Rs155.56
- Light diesel — Rs148.31

The finance minister noted some burden was shifted on the masses, but despite the massive increase in the price of petroleum products, the government was still bearing losses. Pakistan and the IMF could not reach a staff-level agreement a day earlier after the Fund said there were deviations from the policies that were agreed between both sides. The PTI-led government had originally agreed to the IMF's demand of raising the price of electricity and petroleum products but, later in March, Imran Khan announced subsidies on both commodities — and the current government was continuing with the same arrangement.

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IMF to conditionally release \$900mn

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the IMF have worked out the outlines for the release of over \$900 million in funds that would come through once Pakistan removes its fuel subsidies, a Pakistani source directly involved in talks in Qatar said, requesting anonymity. The talks in Qatar capital Doha on the resumption of a funding programme concluded on Wednesday. An IMF official said in a statement that considerable progress had been made, but he emphasized the urgency of Pakistan removing fuel and energy subsidies to get back on track. "When we raise fuel prices, the deal will be done. We have worked out the outlines of a deal," the source told Reuters in a text message after the end of the talks in Doha. The IMF representative in Pakistan did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Pakistan entered a three-year, \$6 billion IMF deal in 2019, but about half of the funds are yet to be released.

A pending tranche of over \$900 million dollars is contingent on a successful IMF review. A successful review would also unlock other funding avenues for cash-strapped Pakistan, whose foreign reserves cover less than two months' worth of imports.

Khan gives 6-day ultimatum to govt

"Dissolve assemblies; announce elections or I will come back after 6 days"



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: After a packed day of political drama and violence across Pakistan, PTI chairman Imran Khan gave Thursday morning a six-day ultimatum to the PML-N government to dissolve the assemblies and announce an election, indicating an end to the party's much-touted 'Azadi March'. The PTI chairman was off to Bani Gala after addressing the participants of the 'Azadi March' at Jinnah Avenue, leaving behind his supporters who marched for hours in

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SC bars govt from action against Imran Khan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday barred the government from initiating action against PTI Chairman and former prime minister Imran Khan for leading the marchers to D-Chowk.

A five member bench of the top court headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Umar Ata Bandial and comprising and comprising Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi and Justice Sayeed Mazahar Ali Akbar Naqvi heard the government's plea for action against Imran Khan. The incumbent government had sought court's permission to initiate action against Imran Khan on violating the court's order and ordering the protesters of reaching D-Chowk.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing the National Assembly session. — DNA

No-trust motion against CM Bizenjo fails

DNA

QUETTA: The Balochistan Assembly on Thursday rejected the tabling of a no-confidence motion against Chief Minister Abdul Qudus Bizenjo after it failed to garner the support of the required number of lawmakers to move the motion. According to the Constitution, a no-confidence motion needs the signatures of 20 per cent of the make-up of the legislative body to be tabled for discussion, while half the members must vote in favour of it to be passed. In the 65-member Balochistan Assembly, a no-confidence motion requires 33 lawmakers' backing to be passed. The motion bore the signatures of 14 lawmakers when it was submitted to the assembly last Wednesday. However, upon its tabling today, the support was reduced to 11 legislators against the requirement of a minimum of 13 MPs.

UN: Six Pakistanis honoured posthumously

DNA

NEW YORK: The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was observed at the UN Headquarters in New York. Secretary-General António Guterres addressed the ceremony and conferred the Dag Hammarskjöld Medal posthumously on 117 military, police and civilian peacekeepers who lost their lives while serving under the UN flag last year. Among the peacekeepers honoured, six are from

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Allied govt to decide on elections: PM

Speaking on the floor, the Premier told PTI that its dictation would not work

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday ruled out the notion of receiving "dictation" from PTI Chairman Imran Khan and stressed that the National Assembly would make decisions regarding the date of the next general elections. Although the prime minister said he "refuses to be dictated" during his hard-hitting speech in the NA, he did not rule out holding talks with the PTI after the party's long march and rallies across the country — ones that led to chaos and compelled the government to summon the army in Islamabad. Addressing the lower house after the PTI chairman issued a six-day ultimatum to announce a date for the elections, the prime minister said holding talks is the ultimate weapon of politicians. "The doors for talks are open; I can form a committee." The prime minister said Pakistan was still in danger and told the

Continued on Page 06

NA bill to abolish EVMs' use

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Thursday passed a bill to abolish the former government's election reforms giving overseas Pakistanis the right to vote through i-Voting and electronic voting machines (EVMs). The development came during the Parliament meeting convened by President Arif Alvi to deliberate on the current economic situation of the country. The Election Amendment Bill 2022 — which was introduced by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Murtaza Javed Abbasi — was introduced in the National Assembly today. The NA had bulldozed legislation for use of EVMs through the passage of a bill on November 17, 2021, giving overseas

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'Imran Khan left after damaging properties'

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz said on Thursday that the place is the same but the agenda is different! Fitna Khan and his group left after setting fire to properties last night and fled. Following the end of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) long march, she wrote on the social networking site Twitter that the federal capital had been set on fire and property had been damaged by the PTI workers. The PML-N Vice President said that

Shahbaz Sharif not only there to for the nation at this place today, but also raised the morale of the law enforcement agencies and promoted a positive national thinking. Earlier, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif paid rich tributes to the role of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and said that security personnel have performed their duties for protecting

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Playing games in NATO, Turkey eyes role in new world order — Page 05

Iraq passes bill 'criminalizing' relations with Israel — Page 06

Kazakh President Tokayev visits Bishkek to cement ties — Page 07

Africa and Pakistan have all reasons to boost cooperation — Page 08

Of PTI's long march and early elections

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI

PTI Chairman Imran Khan in his early morning speech on Thursday announced to call off the long march by giving a six day deadline to the government for making an announcement regarding early elections and dissolution of the National Assembly. Both the PTI workers and the govt functionaries heaved a sigh of relief after this as nobody was in a mood of prolonged strife. Making the PTI men and women and even children sit under the scorching heat ostensibly was not a good idea therefore Imran Khan rightly decided to call it a day.

It is believed that Imran Khan's decision not to organize a dharna was part of a deal reached between the government and the PTI leadership. The said deal of agreement was reportedly facilitated by

the men from the Establishment. According to the arrangement the PTI would not stage a permanent dharna, rather it would hold a gathering, the PTI chairman will deliver a speech and then they will disperse. That is what exactly happened. The option of PTI MPs returning to the parliament was also discussed. The Establishment people tried to convince the PTI leaders that they can be more effective while being part of the Assembly. Then, for the appointment of the caretaker set and the Chief Election Commissioner opposition's input was also a must but since they were not part of the Assembly therefore this consultation process cannot be done. The PTI nevertheless did not seem interested in returning to the assembly.

According to sources, Asad Umar, Pervez Khatak and Shah Mahmood Qureshi took part in the Establishment-led talks. From the government side, Ayaz Sadiq, Asad Mahmood and Yousaf Raza Gillani participated. Talks, which continued for at least three hours, had yielded positive results in the sense that both sides agreed to avoid violence and bloodshed. But then suddenly both sides issued messages that there was no such deal, after some of the media houses broke the news of the agreement. The reason why the government did not agree to step down immediately was it was believed as if the PTI had failed to woo people to their long march therefore why they should negotiate with the PTI who had, according to them, had failed to put up a big show. On the other hand the PTI leaders warned the government that it had miscalculated PTI might. The apex court of the county also tried to make both parties sit and sort of the issue. However the government reaction and miscalculation about PTI strength further aggravated the situation. All said and done, the PTI Chairman has given six days to the government to make its mind regarding elections. The govern-

ment on the other hand is not ready to listen to PTI demands. The Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif while speaking on the floor of the House on Thursday made it clear that any decision regarding holding of elections shall be taken by the PML N and its allies. He made it candidly clear that PTI's blackmailing tactics can never force them to make any announcement whatsoever in this regard. But from the face of it, it appears as if the government and especially the PML N has made its mind to call early elections. Its main concern was electoral reforms and passage of new amendments about the accountability body. All these tasks were successfully completed in Thursday's session therefore the agenda seems to have been fulfilled. It is likely that an announcement about the elections may be made after May 28. So what happens when the new elections are announced? Obviously a caretaker set shall be put in place, mostly consisting of technocrats. There are some solid rumors that the caretaker setup may continue beyond its three months stipulated mandate. Some say it may continue for even one or two years. The proponents of this idea are of the view that going to

elections without thorough accountability would again bring back the same old faces. Which means the country would continue to reel under poverty; economic distress and social injustices. However, the problem in this scenario is that the caretaker set up perhaps cannot appoint the new army chief. But it may grant extension. As announced by the incumbent COAS he was not interested in any such thing. Whatever may be the future scenario, one thing is for sure that the country needs some respite from the grave economic crunch. We need to have stability sooner rather than later. That is the only way to not only control the dollar's upward trend but to achieve economic stability as well. Talks with the IMF still continue. A breather from the monetary body would for sure help prop up the sagging economy. The Government believes it would have reached a deal with the IMF provided the PTI had not announced the long march on the same date. All parties, and particularly the ruling party since they are now at the helm of the affairs, need to stand above all prejudices and political liking and disliking for the ultimate good of the country.

Efforts underway for improvement of food safety compliances in KP

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) organized a four-day Training of Trainers on Good Hygiene Practices (GHP) and Good Animal Husbandry Practices (GAHP) for government regulatory and training authorities under the Project for Agri-food and Agro-industry Development (PAFAID) in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) from 23-26 May 2022.

The training aimed at improving food safety compliance by enhancing the local regulatory capacity to roll out and facilitate the adoption of the actor-based handbooks on the GHP and Good Hygiene which were launched earlier this year. Delivered in collaboration with the University of Veterinary Science (UVAS), the training was

attended by representatives of the KP Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KPFHFA), the Livestock and Dairy Development Department (LDD), and the Local Council Board (LCB). The training concluded with an inspection and training visit to a local slaughterhouse where participants benefited from demonstrative, hands-on learning regarding best practices and inspection for slaughterhouse operations.

Addressing the trainees, Dr. Asal Khan (Director Planning L&DD KP), appreciated PAFAID's efforts to promote food safety compliance in the province from meat production to consumption. He also lauded the project for facilitating knowledge sharing and capacity building, particularly through the up-gradation of the Animal Husbandry In-service Training Institute (AHITI) which is the primary training authority for meat inspectors, veteri-

nary assistants, and food handlers in the province. Ms. Lubna Tajik, UNIDO's Lead National Project Coordinator, shared PAFAID's achievements and upcoming activities whereby UNIDO will facilitate the departments in cascading training at the district level and will support meat enterprises in upgrading their operations according to food safety standards. PAFAID is a four-year Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) funded project being implemented by UNIDO in close coordination with the Government of Pakistan. It aims at improved pilot applications of the compliance capacities and adds value to practices in the cattle meat value chain in KP and the apple value chain in Balochistan province. For more information, please visit the website www.pafaid.org.



Eco-friendly textile practices imperative, says Dr Iqrar

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Eco-friendly textile practices are imperative for pollution-free environment as the global fashion industry emits a hefty amount of greenhouse gases, said Prof Dr Iqrar Ahmad Khan Vice Chancellor University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). Speaking at a seminar on "Sustainability and Fashion" arranged by Institute of Home Science UAF at New Senate Hall here Thursday, he said, "We have to promote environmental friendly textile and agriculture practices". He was of view that heavy usage of chemicals sans measures had polluted water while smoke chunk-

ing from factories had destroyed air quality, provoking the climate changes. "We are destroying our environment with our own hands. We have to preserve it for the future generation", he said, adding that academia-industry linkages were prerequisite to make development and address different issues being faced by the globe. Dean Faculty of Food Nutrition & Home Sciences Dr Masood Sadiq Butt said that the university was making all-out efforts to cement ties between academia and industry. He said that sustainability textile was an umbrella term for clothes that were created and consumed in a way that could be sustained, recycled while protecting

both environment and those producing garment with ecological integrity. Dean National Textile University (NTU) Faisalabad Dr Zafar Javed said that there were 7.8 billion population of the world whereas 150 billion garments were being produced. Some countries were producing recycled clothes to preserve the nature and to combat climate challenges. He said that practice of taking textile waste to landfill sites ended by regulations endorsed in Finland in 2016. The fashion was changing with a fast pace that was also creating disturbance, he added. Deputy General Manager Stitching Gohar Textile Sheraz Shan said that it was

misconception that leather came from meat industry but the fashion industry killed 430 million animals per year. Majority of the clothes were petroleum based and made from fusel fuels including polyester, acrylic, and nylon etc. which were among the major pollution contributors, he said and added as many as 8000 types of chemicals from farm to final produce were used which reciprocally caused pollution and health hazards. Chairman University of Engineering and Technology Lahore Faisalabad Campus Dr Mohsin Malik stressed the need to promote natural sustainable fiber including banana, okra and bamboos and certified bio based fabric.

FESCO launches public safety awareness campaign

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has launched a public safety awareness campaign for prevention from electricity-related mishaps. FESCO Spokesman Tahir Sheikh said on Thursday that Health Safety & Environment Directorate FESCO would sponsor the awareness drive on special directives of FESCO Board of Directors (BoDs) and Health Safety Environment & Quality Assurance Committee (HSE&QA) so that citizens could take precautionary measures to protect themselves from electric shocks, fires and lightning strikes in buildings and plazas. He said that the public would be imparted awareness about electrical grounding and earthing system. He said that earthing in buildings / plazas was very

imperative to protect human life from the risk of electric shock or death as well as to protect the building, machinery and equipment in case of any fault. He appealed the consumers to keep all unnecessary metal devices and wires away from electrical installations. He said that earthing would provide a safe way to eliminate lightning and short-circuiting of current. It would also help prevent fire hazards due to current leakage. He said that FESCO had already issued necessary instructions that the causes of electrical fire hazards including the use of undersized wires/ switches in wiring, the use of over-rated fuses, the use of extension cords on a regular basis and substandard circuits, use of breakers, switches/ plugs etc., use of metal distribution box instead of wooden box and laying wires under rugs, mats or doors etc. He appealed to the public to follow the safety precautions, issued by FESCO so that fire incidents could be averted at maximum extent. He also appealed to replace all damaged wires, undersized wires and substandard switches as soon as possible. - DNA

Does financial innovation benefit the society?

M ALI ABDULLAH

WE live in a world which loves development. We will generally adore organizations which have created a few items which can be viewed as imaginative. The basic faith in the industrialist framework is that development is useful. It is development which makes more worth, and since the industrialist framework permits the maker of advancement to receive the most rewards, it empowers development. Be that as it may, when the word monetary is placed before development, the conclusions will generally change exceptionally quick. This is on the grounds that the overall population accepts that monetary advancement is somewhat horrible to them. Perhaps it assists a couple of speculation investors with acquiring greater rewards. Notwithstanding, the existences of ordinary citizens aren't exactly in an ideal situation on account of monetary advancement. In this article, we will examine

a portion of the instances of monetary advancement. Then, at that point, we will attempt to break down whether this advancement has been valuable to society in general. Examples of Financial Innovation: Monetary advancement can be isolated into numerous classes. There are developments connected with individual banking, corporate banking as well as capital business sectors. A few models are as per the following:

- Mechanized Teller Machine (ATM)
- Charge cards
- Electronic Banking
- Quick Messaging System
- Lockbox
- Credit Default Swaps
- Collateralized Debt Obligations

Assuming the above rundown of advancements is investigated cautiously, all developments in the monetary world can be comprehensively partitioned into two classifications viz. specialized and non-specialized. These mechanical advancements certainly make the world a superior spot. For example, on account of

e-banking, individuals invest lesser energy in the banks. Accordingly, they can utilize this opportunity to either bring in more cash or for relaxation exercises. A portion of the normal measurements that can be utilized to order monetary advancements have been given in this article. **What Is A Good Financial Innovation?** Over the top Risk Taking: A decent monetary development doesn't uphold inordinate gamble taking. Monetary advancement is just great assuming that it permits decentralization of hazard. It is critical that the instrument being created can't be utilized for risk-taking by any stretch of the imagination. For example, consider the instance of credit default trades. These items fill in as protection assuming you as of now hold a bond. Consequently, assuming you have obligations of organization A and you purchase credit default trades, you are purchasing protection. Nonetheless, the issue is that credit default trades can be bought with next to no

intrigue in the hidden. In such cases, the financial backer stands to benefit if organization A flounders on its obligation. This is where protection is transformed into betting. Henceforth, credit default trades would qualify as a decent monetary advancement assuming the chance of their abuse was radically diminished. Inordinate Production: It is critical to understand that credit influences the genuine economy. In the event that all the credit begins streaming to one area, that area will observe a blast though different areas will observe a bust. It is the occupation of the monetary area to guarantee that the assets are proportionately disseminated among the various areas in the economy. Nonetheless, a great deal of times monetary advancement does the specific inverse. It prompts the blockage of assets in one or a couple of areas of the economy. Think about the instance of securitization. Securitization permits banks to offer their old advances to financial backers. Then they

get the cash and can begin making new credits. The issue with securitization is that it permits extreme assets to be siphoned into one area of the economy. Subsequently, the land area got a ton of assets though different areas will quite often be famished of assets. This is the justification for why it means quite a bit to view at monetary advancements starting here of see as well. Assuming the supposed advancement prompts an uneven appropriation of abundance for specific areas, then, at that point, it shouldn't actually be called a development. **Exorbitant Debt:** Lastly, it is vital to guarantee that the supposed monetary advancement doesn't cultivate a culture of extreme obligation. The multiplication of charge cards can be taken as a contextual investigation. Before Mastercards became normal on the planet, the family area was not exactly that obliged. Be that as it may, this alleged advancement gives credit to youngsters toward the start of their vocations. Commonly, this credit

is used untrustworthily. Obviously, the obligation of use lies with the borrower. Be that as it may, Mastercard organizations are known for making captivating offers which advance unreasonable and silly spending. Monetary advancement should be investigated from this point also. On the off chance that an item advances unreasonable spending, calling it an innovation would be wrong. To summarize it, noticing the contrast between monetary advancement and general innovation is significant. Designing credit default trades isn't equivalent to creating the web. This is on the grounds that there is plausible that credit default trades will be abused. It is therefore that monetary controllers need to hold fast. Now and again, it very well might be claimed that these controllers smother monetary advancement. Be that as it may, as we have found in this article, not all monetary advancement improves life for individuals utilizing it. - *Writer is a student of SZABIST*



ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, Mr. Julien Harneis called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Mr. Miftah Ismail. - DNA

Anti-polio campaign to vaccinate children in Swat

He said that 1847 polio workers and 394 supervisory staff have been deployed to vaccinate the children against polio disease

PESHAWAR: District Health Officer Swat, Dr Salim Khan Thursday said that the five-day anti-polio vaccination drive was in full swing in district Swat wherein as many as 452,818 children under the age of five would be vaccinated against the crippling disease. Talking to media, he said that the five-day anti-polio campaign started from May 23, adding that during the first four days, the polio teams visited house to house to vaccinate the children under the age of five. He said that 1847 polio workers and 394 supervisory staff have been deployed to vaccinate the children against polio disease. He urged parents to get their children vaccinated against the polio disease and protect them from permanent disability. - APP

3 unregistered factories sealed

PESHAWAR: District administration Mardan has sealed three factories for lack of registration and certificate of quality control authority on Thursday. On directives of the Deputy Commissioner (DC), Habibullah Arif, Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC), Adeel Ahmad Sattar inspected food items manufacturing units in Par Hoti, Mardan. He checked cleanliness, expired and adulteration in food items. He directed the owners of factories for adherence to the principles of hygienic conditions with immediate effect and also directed them for obtaining quality control certificates from the concerned agencies. - APP

Pakistan Navy seizes huge cache of drugs

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy Ship DEHSHAT in collaboration with PN air units seized approximately 4500 Kgs of drugs at North Arabian Sea. While undertaking maritime security operations, PNS DEHSHAT intercepted

the suspicious dhow and recovered large cache of drugs that valued approximately 6.7 million dollar in international market. The successful operation by Pakistan Navy in seizure of huge quantity of narcotics is a testimony to the fact that Pakistan Navy remains committed to fulfill national and inter-

national obligations maintaining good order at sea. Pakistan Navy is vigilant to counter any illegal activity and safeguard its maritime borders. The successful execution of anti-narcotics operation is a demonstration of Pakistan Navy's resolve to deter and disrupt illegal activities in maritime zone of Pakistan.



FESCO issues shutdown programme



FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown programme for Saturday for necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the programme, electricity supply from Rafi Cotton and Anjum Textile feeders emanating from 132-kV Shakkot grid station, will remain suspended from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. while Rehmat Abad, Ghazi Abad, Bhaiwala, NTU, Wapda Academy, Hamdard and Mughalpura feeders originating from 132-kV Nishatabad grid station will observe shutdown from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. on Saturday, May 28. Similarly, electricity supply from College Road feeder emanating from 132-kV Chenab Nagar grid station will remain suspended from 5 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. whereas Hyundai Nishat feeder originating from 132-kV FIEDMC-II grid station, Karas Paint, Coca Cola, Orient Material, Hyundai Nishat and FIEDMC feeders emanating from 132-kV FIEDMC grid station and Scarp-1 feeder originating from 132-kV Chak Jhumra grid station will observe load shedding from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. on May 28, 2022. - APP

FESCO gives employment to late employees' children

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) gave away appointment letters to children of the late employees of the company. Letters were given to Saleemullah (naibqasid), Muhammad Wasim Tahir (sanitary worker), Intesham Ali (SSO-II), Zeeshanullah Saleem (SSO-II), Zenab Shabbir (commercial assistant), Hamza Anwar (UDC), Shafiqat Masih (sanitary worker), Sidra Anwar (commercial assistant) and Mustafa Anam (naibqasid). FESCO Chief Executive Officer Engineer Bashir Ahmed distributed the letters while Director General Admin Athar Ayub, Chief Engineer Operation Gulam Farooq, General Secretary Wapda Hydro Union Sarfraz Hundal were also present. - APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

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



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Pak-Africa current \$4.18 billion trade below than it's potential

Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco & Dean of the African Corps said that the Africa Continental Free Trade Area comprising 55 countries with a population of around 1.4 billion holds tremendous economic prospects for Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ali Javed, Additional Secretary (Africa), Ministry of Foreign Affairs has urged the business community to focus on Africa for trade and exports as the African continent offers huge potential to Pakistan for enhancing trade ties. He said this while addressing as Chief Guest the Africa Day celebrated at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). H.E. Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco & Dean of the African Corps, H.E. Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan & Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, diplomats of African countries, Ambassadors of Azerbaijan, Jordan, Kuwait and Vietnam, Counsellor of French Embassy, Senator Lt. Gen. (Retd) Abdul Qayyum and a large number of the business community were present at the occasion. Ali Javed said that Pakistan has now increased its Ambassadors up to 20 in the African region in order to improve its trade and economic ties with Africa and added that the government would cooperate with the business community in exploring new opportunities of promoting exports to Africa.

H.E. Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco & Dean of the African Corps said that the Africa Continental Free Trade Area comprising 55 countries with a population of around 1.4 billion holds tremendous economic prospects for Pakistan and the Pakistani private sector should take benefit of it by enhancing trade cooperation with African countries. He stressed that the Pakistani business community should explore JVs and investment in Africa, which is emerging as the



ISLAMABAD: Mr Atadjan Movlamov Dean of Diplomatic Corps, Mr Mohammad Karmoune Dean of Africa, Mr Mthuthuzeli Madikiza High Commissioner South Africa, Mr M. Bello Abioye High Commissioner of Nigeria, Mr Rashid Ally Soobadar High Commissioner Mauritius, Mr Shirwa Abdullahi Ibrahim Ambassador of Somalia, Mr Shakeel Munir President ICCI, Ali Javed Additional Foreign Secretary Khalid Iqbal Malik Chairman Founder Group (ICCI), Zafar Bakhtawari Chairman Pakistan Africa Friendship Association, Jamshed Akhter Sheikh (SVP), Faheem Khan (VP) At Africa day celebration at ICCI Islamabad. – DNA

continent of the future. He highlighted agriculture, industry, mining, IT, renewable energy, textiles, pharmaceuticals, transport, tourism and infrastructure as potential areas of cooperation between Pakistan and Africa. Former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry senior leader of United Business Group (UBG) of FPCCI Zafar Bakhtawari said the current \$4.18 billion annual trade volume between Pakistan and Africa is far below then it's potential in the Africa region, which could be doubled in the next three

years. Exploring new markets and trade diversification policy in Africa is critical to increasing annual trade, he said in a press release issued. He said this while addressing 'Africa Day' organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry here. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry emphasized that the government should facilitate the private sector in promoting strong business linkages with African counterparts that would help in exploring new areas of bilateral business col-

laboration. He said that the pandemic has subsided now and it is the right time that both sides should facilitate frequent exchange of trade delegations to improve bilateral trade relations. He said that the government should increase its footprint in Africa by posting more trade envoys and opening more trade wings at Pakistani Embassies in Africa. He said that the government should initiate market access negotiations for bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with African countries that would help in boosting Pakistan's trade and exports with Africa. Khalid Iqbal Malik, Chairman Found-

er Group said that Africa's rich natural resources, vast import market, strong economic growth patterns and a new continent-wide framework for free trade offer unique opportunities to Pakistan and urged that the business community should accelerate efforts to develop strong trade ties with African countries in order to achieve multiple benefits for our economy. Jamshaid Akhter Sheikh, Senior Vice President ICCI thanked the excellences, distinguished guests and the participants for attending the Africa Day.

PTI violates Apex Court's order: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Wednesday pointed out before the apex court to take notice of the blatant violation of its orders by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders and workers as they are not following designated location during the long march. She, in a series of tweets, said the Federal Government, through its effective administrative decisions, had not only kept the Fitna-e-Azam led armed and violent mob under control the entire day, but also protected the life and property of the people. However, the PTI brazenly flouted the orders given by the apex court in the case related to the long march route. She said the PTI had attacked the Federal Capital by using the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's resources including its police. "The honourable court should take notice of this contempt of court so that the protection of the people's life and property could be ensured," the minister said. She also shared a video of the burning Metro Station near China Chowk, which according to her, was set on fire by "the peaceful violent mob" of PTI. – APP

Youm-e-Takbir a golden day of Pakistan's history

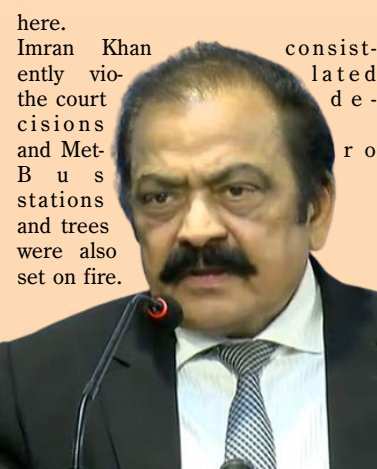
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N Senior leader Tahira Aurangzeb on Thursday said that May 28, 1998, was a golden day of Pakistan's defense history where Pakistan under the leadership of former PM Nawaz Sharif had emerged as a nuclear power on the map of the world. Talking to the PTV news channel, she said that 'Youm-e-Takbeer' is a Pakistani nation's courage and ingenuity, that it is a day of great honor for Pakistan when Islamabad gave a matching response to the Indian nuclear tests by detonating nuclear devices. She also paid rich tributes to the team of nuclear scientists who raised Pakistan's strategic status in the comity of nations and signified the principle of self-reliance.

The present government again reaffirmed its resolve to safeguard Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence against any form of aggression, she added. The observance of this day provides us another opportunity to reiterate its resolve for the defense and solidarity of the country, she mentioned. – APP



People completely rejected riot: Sana

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sanaullah while paying tribute to the personnel of Rangers and Islamabad Police for ensuring protection to lives and property of the people has said that the people have completely rejected the riot and seditious group. He said that he personally monitored the entire situation through out the night, adding that Imran Khan entered the city after getting permission from the Supreme Court to hold a public gathering at a designated place. The minister said Imran Khan violated the court orders under which Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) granted permission to organize a public meeting at the designated place, said a statement issued



Throughout the night, the PTI chief

with teargas, he said. – APP

here. Imran Khan violated the court orders and Met-Bus stations and trees were also set on fire. Refuting the baseless propaganda, he clarified that police did not fire a single rubber bullet. Eighteen personnel of Rangers and police sustained serious injuries while ensuring protection to the lives and property of the citizen, he added. He said Islamabad Police and Rangers would continue to perform their duty to protect lives and property of the people. Rangers and Islamabad Police guarded the citizens with bravely and responsibly and controlled the rioters



ISLAMABAD: Biker busy washes his bike in the Korang stream. – APP

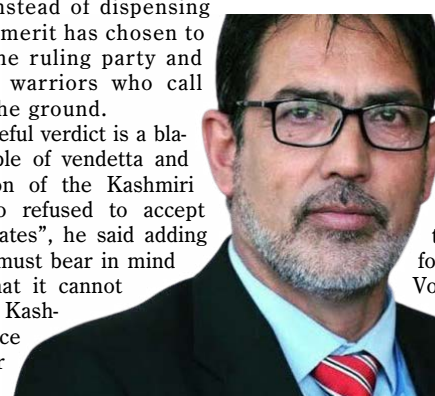
Shameful verdict is a blatant example of vendetta

ISLAMABAD: Senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader Altaf Hussain Wani has denounced in strong terms the unfair trial and judgment of conviction by India's Kangaroo court against the illegally detained JKLF chairman Muhammad Yasin Malik and termed the unjust court ruling as a blatant violation of international law and basic norms of justice. In a statement issued here on Thursday, the APHC leader while referring to Indian judiciary's bias against the Kashmiris, said that Malik's unilateral trial and sentence was yet another attempt to satisfy the dead conscience of the Indian society and racist regime that derives pleasure by inflicting pain and penalizing Kashmiris. Terming the court order as a flagrant violation of basic human rights, Wani said that unjust sentencing of Malik in a sham trial speaks volumes about the falling justice system in India.

The lopsided verdict, he said, was a black spot on the face of Indian judiciary that instead of dispensing justice on merit has chosen to appease the ruling party and right-wing warriors who call shots on the ground. "The shameful verdict is a blatant example of vendetta and victimization of the Kashmiri leader who refused to accept Indian dictates", he said adding that India must bear in mind the fact that it cannot silence Kashmiris' voice and their passion for freedom by resorting to such mean tactics. "History bears witness to the fact that Indian rulers have

time and again used its judicial apparatus to suppress the Kashmiris' legitimate struggle by targeting those who called spade a spade, spoke truth to the power and stood firmly on ground to defend the rights of the people", Wani said adding that Malik is one of those leading voices who has championed the Kashmir cause with utmost devotion and highlighted the brutalities of the occupation forces. Voicing his serious concerns over the ruthless victimization of Kashmiri leaders, the APHC leader urged the international human rights bodies in particular the UN secretary general to take effective notice

of the matter and play their role in saving the life of Yasin Malik and other Hurriyat leaders who have been booked under similar charges. He said that NIA authorities have filed charge sheets against dozens of other Hurriyat leaders including Nayeem Ahmed Khan, Shabir Ahmed Shah, MassaratAalamBhat and others under UAPA. "The entire charge filed by the notorious investigation agency-the NIA against the Hurriyat leaders is based on false and fictitious assumptions", he said adding that the Indian government was now hell bent on punishing these leaders by conducting a sham trial in the same Kangaroo court. "On one hand the Indian government was using its state apparatus to kill Kashmiri youth in the occupied Kashmir while on the other it has been using judiciary as a tool to eliminate Hurriyat leadership to enable complete silence in Kashmir", he said. – APP



Indian troops martyr three youth in IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, local forces in their fresh act of state terrorism, martyred three Kashmiri youth in Kupwara district on Thursday. According to Kashmir Media Service, the youth were martyred by Indian troops during violent cordon and search operation in Jumagund area of the district. The operation was continued till last reports came in. – APP

Salman Sufi appointed head of PM's Strategic Reforms

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday appointed public policy expert Salman Sufi as the head of the Prime Minister's Strategic Reforms. A Mother Teresa Award winner and an expert in introducing unique social welfare schemes, Salman Sufi will render his services voluntarily. Salman Sufi has introduced a number of people-friendly schemes, including the Punjab Women Protection Act, Violence Against Women Centre, Women on Wheels and Shehre-Khamoshan.

He has also served as Director General Strategic Reform Unit during Shehbaz Sharif's Punjab chief ministership. Salman Sufi was named one of the top five women's rights activists in the world, including by the government of incumbent US President Joe Biden, and was also awarded the Vital Voices Award. – APP

Raja Riaz assures cooperation to govt

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in National Assembly Raja Riaz Ahmed on Thursday assured his optimum cooperation to the government, playing positive role of opposition and pinpointing shortcomings of the government. Responding to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's felicitation as appointment of leader of the opposition in NA, he said opposition wanted the government not to pay heed to conspiracies and attempted chaos and hold the general election after the completion of its five year's tenure. – APP

Texas shooting is an abomination

In the wake of Tuesday's school massacre in Texas, in which 19 children and two teachers were shot dead by a teenager, one wonders how many of these unspeakable crimes must take place and how many innocent souls must perish for the United States to stop this gun-craziness.

The gunman, identified as 18 year old Salvador Ramos, crashed his car into the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas and began shooting point blank at children and teachers. So far, 19 children and two teachers have been confirmed dead. Shortly, before he massacred these precious little children, Ramos is said to have had shot his grandmother, who now lies in hospital in critical condition.

The Uvalde massacre came less than 10 days after the racially-motivated massacre in Buffalo, New York. On May 14, a known white supremacist, wearing body armour and a helmet-mounted camera, opened fire on shoppers and workers at a local supermarket killing 10 people, all African-Americans.

Speaking shortly after the Uvalde crime, President Joe Biden said: "To lose a child is like having a piece of your soul ripped away." However and despite the emotionally charged remarks he delivered, his words are of little consolation to those who lost their little ones in yet another senseless shooting. They are just empty words as his administration, like every administration that preceded it, did nothing to stop the madness of gun culture in America. Just last year, Texas passed seven laws that have actually made it even easier to buy and carry guns. The laws, passed and signed by Governor Greg Abbott in June 2021, include the so-called 'constitutional carry', which means Texans, 21 or older, no longer need a license to carry a handgun in public. Abbot is an outrageously staunch supporter of the freedom to carry guns.

There have been 27 school mass shootings in the US this year. The overall number of mass shootings has exceeded 200 till May 2022. A number of people have been killed in those massacres. The number itself should be considered a federal emergency.

The administration should consider crisis laws to ensure a ban on gun use as per the federal emergency prerogatives that may in some cases supersede state laws. Biden needs to think of that instead of offering shallow words of consolation every time children are massacred by trigger-happy madman.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 321

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Spread of monkey pox can't be ignored

Monkey pox was seldom reported outside central and western Africa. However, on May 7, the United Kingdom reported the first case in a person who had returned from Nigeria. The number of cases rose to 20 by May 20. By then, confirmed cases had been reported in Europe and the United States.

Despite the name, it is not clear which species the disease comes from, but clues hint at rodents such as squirrels. Infected people report pustules or eruptions on their faces or limbs. Most of them recover but fatality exists; according to a European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control report the mortality rate is around 3.6 percent. The emergence of so many infections in non-pandemic zones should alert everyone. Research shows that those with smallpox vaccination are safe from monkey pox, but since smallpox has been eradicated, most countries, including China, stopped vaccinations for it sometime in the 1980s. That means, those aged under 40 have little protection against it and even those above 40 might see their antibodies diminish with time.

Scientists are studying if the virus has any new infection channels. Thankfully, the virus is not highly contagious. However, the emergence of so many cases in Europe and the US has prompted scientists to research if the disease has become virulent.

Although no cases have been reported in China yet, we must bear in mind that pandemics know no borders, and the dangers are higher now that human-to-human transmission of the virus has been seen.

Given that China's under-40 population will have little immunity against monkey pox, it is time domestic medical institutions monitored the situation and created public awareness about monkey pox so as not to create panic. Also, drug research should start early so that China can still control it should it assume pandemic proportions.

Playing games in NATO, Turkey eyes its role in a new world order

James M. Dorsey

"Turkey is a member of NATO, but under Mr. Erdogan, it no longer subscribes to the values that underpin this great alliance. Article 13 of the NATO charter provides a mechanism for members to withdraw. Perhaps it is time to amend Article 13 to establish a procedure for the expulsion of a member nation," Messrs. Lieberman and Wallace wrote

NATO's spat over Turkish opposition to Swedish and Finnish membership is about more than expanding the North Atlantic military alliance. It's as much about Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's immediate political goals as Turkey's positioning itself in a new 21st-century world order. On its surface, the spat is about Turkish efforts to hinder support for Kurdish ethnic, cultural, and national aspirations in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq and a crackdown on alleged supporters of a preacher who lives in exile in the United States. Turkey accuses the preacher, Fethullah Gulen, of instigating a failed military coup in 2016. The spat may also be a play by NATO's second-largest standing military to regain access to US arms sales, particularly upgrades for Turkey's aging fleet of F-16 fighter jets as well as more advanced newer models of the F-16 and the top-of-the-line F-35. Finally, playing the Kurdish card bene-

fits Mr. Erdogan domestically, potentially at a time that the Turkish economy is in the doldrums with a 70 per cent inflation rate. "Erdogan always benefits politically when he takes on the Kurdistan Workers Party (the PKK) and groups linked to it, like the YPG in Syria... In fact, attacking the PKK and the YPG is a two-for-one. Erdogan is seen to take on genuine terrorists and separatists, and at the same time, he gets to take a swipe at the United States, which taps into the vast reservoir of anti-Americanism in Turkey," said Middle East scholar Steven A. Cook. While important issues in and of themselves, they are also likely to influence where Turkey will rank as the world moves towards a bi-polar or multi-polar power structure. The battle over perceived Scandinavian, and mainly, Swedish support for Kurdish aspirations involves the degree to which the United States and Europe will continue to kick the can down on the road of what constitutes yet another Middle Eastern powder keg. Mr. Erdogan announced this week that Turkey would soon launch a new military incursion against US-backed Kurdish fighters in northeast Syria. Mr. Erdogan said the operation would extend the Turkish armed forces' areas of control in Syria to a 30-kilometer swath of land along the two countries' shared border. "The main target of these operations

will be areas which are centers of attacks to our country and safe zones," the Turkish president said.

Turkey asserts that the US-backed People's Protection Units (YPG), a Syrian militia that helped defeat the Islamic State, is an extension of the PKK. The PKK has waged a decades-long insurgency against Turkey, home to some 16 million Kurds. Turkey, the United States, and the European Union have designated the PKK as a terrorist organization. Mr. Erdogan charges that Sweden and Finland give the PKK sanctuary and is demanding that the two countries extradite the group's operatives. Turkey has not officially released the names of 33 people it wants to see extradited, but some were reported in Turkish media close to the government.

Swedish media reported that a physician allegedly on the list had died seven years ago and was not known to have had links to the PKK. Another person named was not resident in Sweden, while at least one other is a Swedish national. Swedish and Finnish officials were in Ankara this week to discuss Turkey's objections. Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson insisted as the officials headed for the Turkish capital that "we do not send money or weapons to terrorist organizations."

Conveniently, pro-government media reported the day the officials arrived that Turkish forces found Swedish anti-tank weapons in a cave in northern Iraq used by the PKK. Turkey recently launched Operation Claw Lock against PKK positions in the region.

Mr. Erdogan's military plans complicate Swedish and Finnish accession to NATO. The two Nordic states slapped an arms embargo on Ankara after its initial incursion into Syria in 2019. The Turkish leader has demanded the lifting of the embargo as part of any deal on Swedish and Finnish NATO member-

ship. A renewed incursion that would cement Turkey's three-year-old military presence in Syria could also throw a monkey wrench into improving relations with the United States due to Turkish support for Ukraine and efforts to mediate an end to the crisis sparked by the Russian invasion.

Turkey slowed its initial incursion into Syria after then US President Donald J. Trump threatened to "destroy and obliterate" Turkey's economy.

The State Department warned this week that a renewed incursion would "undermine regional stability." Revived US arms sales would go a long way to cement improved relations and downplay the significance of Turkey's acquisition of Russia's S-400 anti-missile system, even if Turkey's opposition to Scandinavian membership will have a lingering effect on trust. The United States expelled Turkey from its F-35 program in response to the acquisition. This week, Mr. Erdogan appeared to widen the dispute in NATO after Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis lobbied the US Congress against military sales to Turkey. "Mitsotakis no longer exists for me. I will never agree to meet him," Mr. Erdogan said. He said that Mr. Mitsotakis' lobbying violated an agreement between the two men "not to involve third countries in our bilateral issues." The US arms sales would also impact Turkish Russian relations, even if Turkey, in contrast to most NATO members, will continue seeking to balance its relationships and avoid an open rift with Moscow or Washington.

"Russia's geopolitical revisionism is set to drive Turkey and the West relatively closer together in matters geopolitical and strategic, provided that Turkey's current blockage of Sweden and Finland's NATO membership bid is resolved in the not too distant future," said Turkey scholar Galip Dalay.

Turkey's NATO gamble is a game of high-stakes poker, given that Russia is as much a partner of Turkey as it is a threat. NATO is Turkey's ultimate shield against Russian civilizationalist expansionism. Russian support in 2008 for irredentist regions of Georgia and annexation of Crimea in 2014 created a buffer between Turkey and Ukraine and complicated arrangements between Turkey and Russia in the Black Sea.

Nevertheless, Mr. Erdogan risks fueling a debate about Turkey's membership in NATO, much like Prime Minister Victor Orban's opposition to a European embargo of Russian energy has raised questions about Hungary's place in the EU. "Does Erdogan's Turkey Belong in NATO?" asked former US vice-presidential nominee Joe Lieberman and Mark D. Wallace, a former senator, in an oped in The Wall Street Journal. Unlike Finland and Sweden, the two men noted that Turkey would not meet NATO's democracy requirements if it were applying for membership today.

"Turkey is a member of NATO, but under Mr. Erdogan, it no longer subscribes to the values that underpin this great alliance. Article 13 of the NATO charter provides a mechanism for members to withdraw. Perhaps it is time to amend Article 13 to establish a procedure for the expulsion of a member nation," Messrs. Lieberman and Wallace wrote. The two men implicitly argued that turning the tables on Turkey would force the complicated NATO member back into line. Adding to that, prominent Turkish journalist and analyst Cengiz Candar cautioned that "giving into Ankara's demands amounts to letting an autocrat design the security architecture of Europe and shape the future of the Western system."

We must act together to prevent an apocalyptic famine

Chris Doyle

The figures are scary. Together, Russia and Ukraine supply 28 percent of globally traded wheat, 29 percent of barley, 15 percent of maize and 75 percent of sunflower oil. This incredible level of production of core foodstuffs is under threat and the WFP says exports are down to a "trickle." At present 25 million tons of corn and wheat are just sitting there in Ukraine in overlaid silos. This is equivalent to the annual consumption of all the world's least developed economies. Ukrainian farmers have nowhere to store their next harvest due in June

First the plague, then the famine. Both disease and starvation threaten on a truly global scale. More than 275 million people on this planet are on the brink of starvation. Does that sound apocalyptic? That was the word deployed by the governor of the Bank of England about the global food price

world's second largest producer of wheat, has this month halted wheat exports due to the extreme heat. More than half the US is experiencing drought. As a result of the extreme floods last autumn, China could be facing its worst crop in history this year, according to its agriculture min-

ister. The level of water in the Euphrates is at critically low levels, affecting an already devastated Syrian population. In the Sahel, according to the UN, 7.7 million children under age five are expected to suffer from malnutrition.

And on top of this is the Ukraine-Russia crisis. Let us remember that the situation before the invasion was already severe but had fallen under the shortsighted media and political radars. Even in 2021, nearly 193 million people, a record, were acutely food insecure.

The figures are scary. Together, Russia and Ukraine supply 28 percent of globally traded wheat, 29 percent of barley, 15 percent of maize and 75 percent of sunflower oil. This incredible level of production of core foodstuffs is under threat and the WFP says exports are down to a "trickle." At present 25 million tons of corn and wheat are just sitting there in Ukraine in overlaid silos. This is equivalent to the annual consumption of all the world's least developed economies. Ukrainian farmers have nowhere to store their next harvest due in June. They also complain of a lack of laborers to harvest the crops, as many Ukrainians have fled or are fighting. Considerable amounts of agricultural land are off limits due to fighting or mines and unexploded ordnance. At the same time, the world's breadbasket has bread queues, with Ukrainians struggling to get food on their tables. Russia too may be suffering due to sanctions. It is probably being hit by shortages of seed and pesticides which it typically imports.

Many of the worst affected countries are to be found in the Middle East, notably Syria, Sudan and Yemen. The WFP has had to reduce food rations to 8 million people this

month. Egypt is the world's top importer of wheat. Libya imports half of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine. In Syria, the UN Security Council will have to decide on cross border-humanitarian aid again soon — it will be vital that Russia does not veto the extension of the cross-border mandate. Few will need a reminder that high food prices were a contributing factor to the 2010-2011 protests across the region. Protests must be on the cards once again. Rising energy prices are critical. WFP's operational costs have gone up by \$70 million a month largely due to increased transport and fuel costs. Farmers rely on fuel but also fertilizer and pesticides, supplies of which are also affected by the crisis. At present 20 percent of all fertilizer exports are restricted.

What are the possible solutions? What needs to happen? An end to the conflict in Ukraine would be wonderful but highly unlikely. In Ukraine, the road and rail transport options could help in exporting the wheat but it would not be able to replace the port capacity at Odessa. Transporting the cereals to neighboring states is slower and more costly. Nevertheless, what choice is there?

The big question is whether Ukraine's seven Black Sea ports, especially Odessa, can be used. "Truly, failure to open those ports in the Odessa region will be a declaration of war on global food security. And it will result in famine and destabilization and mass migration around the world," said David Beasley, the WFP chief.

Yet the Ukrainians have had to mine the ports to prevent any Russian amphibious landing. Somehow a grand bargain needs to be made to get the Black Sea

ports operational, with ships exporting foodstuffs. Russia will need to agree to end its blockade, and Turkey will need to consent to naval escorts through the Bosphorus — at the moment it has banned all warships from such transit.

The trouble is that Russian military efforts right now are aimed at seizing the Black Sea littoral, a conflict zone of even greater import to it than the Donbas region. It would render Ukraine a landlocked country. No doubt this is why NATO states have increasingly been providing anti-ship weapons. Energetic diplomacy is of the essence though it is hard to see the Russian leadership shifting its position. It stands accused as it is of having targeted Ukrainian silos and fertilizer stores, and of therefore trying to push Ukraine into famine.

Elsewhere, major powers will have to dig deeper to fund humanitarian programs. Existing sanctions regimes, for example on Syria, could be redesigned to ensure they do not hinder vital agricultural activity, as well as ensuring that ordinary Syrians, as opposed to regime cronies, are also not so harshly affected.

These are some possible short-term measures. Yet long-term global food insecurity is not going to disappear. It should focus the minds still further on ending conflicts, the biggest driver of hunger, with 60 percent of the world's hungry living in war zones. Tackling climate change now, not later, is vital too. As with the pandemic, it should be a global effort where every state has a role. Sadly, that has yet to happen. One can only hope that the international system reacts more effectively to global famine.

Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Petroleum prices up by Rs 30

FROM PAGE 01

The finance minister noted that following the decision to hike the prices, financial markets would witness stability, the rupee would strengthen, and the economy would get a boost.

In response to a question, Ismail said due to an increase in the price of petroleum products, inflation would definitely witness an increase. "But tell me, what option did we have instead of taking this step?"

Ismail said Khan — going against the IMF deal — had announced subsidies on petroleum products when his government's tenure was coming to an end.

"We are all the owners of a country. How can we afford [such subsidies] that are costing three times more than running the everyday affairs of the governments," the finance minister said.

'Imran Khan left after...

FROM PAGE 01

the lives and properties of the people in testing times. He was talking to the law enforcement agencies personnel deployed in Red Zone area of Islamabad during his visit to the Red Zone.

The Prime Minister also appreciated Islamabad Traffic Police, Rangers and other agencies for playing their constitutional role and protecting the country's interests. The Prime Minister said that we all have to end hostilities, hatred, and disorder and promote love, passion and national cohesion. Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan will definitely move forward if we follow law and the constitution. He said we have to foil the conspiracy to divide the nation, and make our best efforts to put the country on the path of development and prosperity.

Allied govt to decide on elections: PM

FROM PAGE 01

PTI "mob" that its dictation would not work on the government as it wants to hold transparent elections — stressing that he would not succumb to pressure and hold snap polls. "Imran Niazi, let me make myself clear, you can dictate someone at home, but you cannot blackmail or intimidate the house," the prime minister said in a strong message to the PTI chairman.

The premier praised the NA and its members for passing the bill to abolish the former government's election reforms giving overseas Pakistanis the right to vote through e-Voting and electronic voting machines (EVMs). "NA has laid the foundation of free and fair elections by passing this bill," PM Shehbaz added.

Shedding light on the current situation in the country, PM Shehbaz said that politicians should hold negotiations with patience as he criticised the PTI's "Azadi March". The premier said the PTI chairman is repeating the same mistake that he committed back in 2014, adding that a policeman was martyred and the same happened in 2014 with the police personnel who were performing their duties.

UN: Six Pakistanis...

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan: Police L/Cpl Tahir Ikram, Police L/Cpl Adil Jan, and SGT Muhammad Naem [who served with UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)]; NCE Tahir Mehmood [deployed with the UN Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO)]; SGT Muhammad Shafeeq [who served in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)]; and Mr. Abrar Sayed [who served in civilian capacity with (MINURSO)]. As one of the top troop-contributing countries, Pakistan deeply values the vital role played by the "blue helmets" in maintaining security and stability in many conflict-ridden areas around the world.

Iraq passes bill 'criminalizing' relations with Israel

The bill requires almost all officials, including those in Kurdistan Region, govt institutions and media to refrain from establishing relations with Israel

DNA

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi Council of Representatives on Thursday passed a bill to ban all relations with Israel, in legislation that will also apply to the Kurdistan Region. Prominent Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr referred to the decision as a "great achievement," in a statement following the vote. The Iraqi parliament held its regular meeting on Thursday, headed by Speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi and attended by 275 MPs. The parliamentary meeting be-

gan by changing the name of the bill from "Banning Normalization and Establishment of Relations with the Zionist Entity" to "Criminalizing Normalization and Establishment of Relations with the Zionist Entity." Following the renaming, the legislature passed the bill by consensus of all attending MPs.

"We affirm that this law, which was unanimously voted by the voters, represents a true reflection of the will of the people, a brave national decision, and a position that is the first of its kind in the world in terms of

criminalizing the relationship with the Zionist entity. Therefore, we call on the Arab and Islamic parliaments to issue similar legislation that meets the aspirations of their peoples," the parliament said in a statement on Thursday.

The main part of the bill criminalizes the normalization of relations with the "Zionist entity," a reference to Israel, in addition to the "banning of the establishment of diplomatic, political, military, economic, and cultural relations and any other sort of relations with the invading Zionist entity."

The normalization of ties with Israel as part of the Abraham Accords is a US-led joint Middle East peace initiative. Four countries — the United Arab Emirates, Sudan, Bahrain, and Morocco — have announced normalization agreements with Israel, with America's support. A conference in September advocating for Iraq to join the agreement, was met with widespread condemnation and criticism from the public and officials. Following the announcement of passing the bill, Sadr released a statement praising God and call-

ing on the Iraqi people to take to the streets in celebration of this "great achievement."

The bill requires almost all officials, including those in Kurdistan Region, government institutions and media to refrain from establishing relations with Israel. In March, Iran fired a dozen ballistic missiles towards the capital of the Kurdistan Region Erbil, under the pretext of striking an Israeli base. However, a report by the Iraqi parliament's fact-finding committee later said that it found no evidence to support the Iranian accusations.

Pakistan beat Sri Lanka to win T20I series



DNA

KARACHI: Ayesha Naseem and Bismah Maroof scored 70 runs together as Pakistan women beat Sri Lanka women by seven wickets in second T20I to win three-match series, with a match to go. Set to chase 103 runs, Pakistan lost three

early wickets but skipper Bismah and Ayesha supported Green Shirts' batting. Bismah remained not out for 22 while Ayesha walked out being not out for 45. Achini Kulasuriya, Oshadi Ranasinghe, and Inoka Ranaweera bagged a wicket each for Sri Lanka. Earlier, Pakistani bowlers put up a decent show as Sri

Lanka were restricted to 102-6 in second T20I here at Southend Club on Thursday. Pakistani skipper Bismah lost the toss again and his team was put into bowl first. But, the decision once again backfired for the visitors as they were forced at back foot. Opener Hasini Perera fought hard but wickets falling at the other

end kept building pressure. Perera scored 35 runs off 51 balls including three boundaries. Nilakshi de Silva made 21 runs but it weren't enough to take Sri Lanka to a big total. For Pakistan, Anam Amin, Fatima Sana, Nida Dar, Aiman Anwer, and Tuba Hassan bagged a wicket each.

Swiatek sprints to 30th win in a row

PARIS: Make it 30: Iga Swiatek's winning streak continued Thursday in the second round of the French Open with a 6-0, 6-2 victory over American Alison Riske.

Riske famously defeated Garbine Muguruza at the BNP Paribas Open in March from 6-0, 3-0 down, but there was no repeat to be had in Paris against the World No.1, though she did save three break points in the 10th game of the match to get on the board. She also saved match point at 6-0, 5-2 with a second-serve ace.

Swiatek hit 23 winners to 15 unforced errors in 61 minutes, and she lost just 10 points in seven service games. She improved to 3-0 against Riske with the victory, with all three wins coming on clay; they played in both Madrid and Rome last year. Over the course of her winning streak, Swiatek has been on the record saying that she's been taking her matches just one point at a time. That mentality was on full display against Riske at the start of the second set.

After holding serve to lead 6-0, 1-0, Swiatek sat down in her chair, sipping from her water bottle and expecting a full changeover; she knowingly jumped up moments later after an amusing exchange with chair umpire Emmanuel Joseph, complete with a nearly literal spit-take. — Agencies

Pakistan out from Hockey WC-2023

JAKARTA: India defeated Indonesia with handsome 16-0 margin to edge out Pakistan on goal difference not only from Asia Cup but next year's Hockey World Cup too.

Pakistan, who lost their last pool A match from Japan by 3-2, wanted Indonesia to restrict India to 14 goals. However, India displayed powerful show to outclass the 50th ranked Indonesia in last pool A game by scoring 16 goals. India alongside Japan have qualified to super four stage of the Asia Cup 2022. Malaysia and South Korea have made into the knockout stage from pool B. Remember, India was already qualified for Hockey World Cup 2023 being the host. The mega event is all set to be played from January 13 to 29, 2023. — DNA

Wildcard stuns Pliskova for life-changing win

PARIS: French wildcard Leolia Jeanjean stunned eighth seed Karolina Pliskova in the French Open second round for a win she said "will change everything". The world number 227, who lived on minimum wage after a knee injury when she was 15 kept her off the courts for two years, beat the Czech 6-2 6-2. The 26-year-old has earned a minimum of 125,800 euros (£107,118) here following the upset that surprised even her. "I don't really know how it's possible, I don't have an explanation," she said. Jeanjean is a former big hope of French tennis, but after her injury she was dropped by Nike, which ended a 10-year sponsorship deal, and by the French federation, which had assigned her a full-time coach when she was 12. She then studied in the United States at the Lynn University in Florida and earned a degree in finance, only for her return to tennis be slowed down by the Covid-19 pandemic. "I lived on minimum wage and I didn't live from day-to-day, but week after week," Jeanjean added. "I put all the money I had into a week's worth of tournaments and if they went well I got another week, but if they went badly I didn't play for two months because it was financially impossible. [It [the prize money] will make life easier. I can certainly pay a coach, pay my tickets when I go to tournaments. I can actually travel around further away. — Agencies



Medvedev beats Djere to move into third round

PARIS: Second seed Daniil Medvedev moved into the third round of the French Open by beating Serbia's Laslo Djere. The 26-year-old US Open champion gained a routine 6-3 6-4 6-3 victory in Thursday's opening match on Court Philippe Chatrier. The Russian will face Serbia's 28th seed Miomir Kecmanovic, who won in four sets against Alexander Bublik. "It was a very tough match but I'm happy to win. I have a lot more to do to be remembered," Medvedev said. "Laslo was playing a bit better clay-court tennis but I managed to fight to put one more ball in." Medvedev, who had a hernia operation in April, has now won both of his matches in three sets after beating Argentina's Facundo Bagnis 6-2 6-2 6-2 in the first round. Medvedev, competing under a neutral flag in Paris, is one of the players who will not be allowed to compete at Wimbledon this year after Russian and Belarusian players were banned following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. — DNA

Spain to reform secret services after hacking scandal

MADRID: Spain will "strengthen judicial control" over its secret services in the wake of a scandal over the hacking of the mobile phones of top politicians, according to Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

The scandal broke in April when it emerged the phones of Catalan separatist leaders had been tapped by Spanish intelligence services. It widened when the government confirmed the phones of Sanchez and the defence and interior ministers were also targeted in an "external attack". The affair has sparked a crisis between Sanchez's minority government and the Catalan pro-independence party ERC.

Sanchez's fragile coalition relies on the ERC to pass legislation in parliament and remain in power until the next general election due at the end of 2023. "It is a question of strengthening the guarantees of this control but also of ensuring maximum respect for the individual and political rights of people", Sanchez told parliament on Thursday as he announced the reform. Sanchez also said the government will adopt a new law governing "classified information", which will replace the existing legislation adopted in 1968 during the dictatorship of General Francisco Franco.

"We must urgently adopt regulations to democratic, constitutional principles," he

said. Spy agency chief sacked: The government last month sacked the head of Spain's CNI intelligence agency, Paz Esteban, over the hacking scandal. She was the first woman to lead the agency. Her dismissal came after she told a parliamentary committee that 18 Catalan separatists, including Pere Aragonés, the head of Catalonia's regional government, had been spied on by the CNI but always with court approval. Canadian cybersecurity watchdog Citizen Lab had said in April that the phones of more than 60 people linked to the Catalan separatist movement had been tapped using Pegasus spyware after a failed independence bid in 2017.

The scandal deepened after the government announced on May 2 that the phones of Sanchez and defence minister Margarita Robles were hacked by the same spyware, made by Israel's NSO group, in May and June 2021.

Sanchez is the first serving head of government confirmed to have been targeted by controversial Pegasus spyware. The government later said interior minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska's phone was also among those hacked last year. The revelations raised questions over who is to blame and whether Spain has adequate security protocols. — DNA

NA bill to abolish EVMs' use

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistanis the right to vote in general elections through a voting device introduced by the PTI government. Speaking at the NA session, Federal Minister of Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar said that holding polls using EVMs in a single day is "impossible". Tarar said the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had also expressed its inability to hold the elections through i-voting and EVMs in such a short span of time, that too without proper homework. He said two amendments are being brought to revive the Elections Act 2017, enabling the ECP to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections. The minister dismissed the impression that the amendment was aimed at depriving overseas Pakistanis of their right to vote, adding that Pakistanis living abroad were a "precious asset of the country" and the government does not believe in snatching their right to vote.

Regarding the use of EVMs, the law minister said they are not against the use of technology, but they had concerns about misuse of technology as the Results Transmission System (RTS) had failed in the 2018 elections to favour a particular political party. Meanwhile, a motion to suspend the rule of sending Election Act Amendment Bill 2022 to the Standing Committee was also passed. Moreover, the house also approved the National Accountability (Second Amendment) Bill, 2021, formulating a post-retirement procedure for its chairman.

Khan gives 6-day ultimatum to govt

FROM PAGE 01

anticipation of a major public gathering and sit-in. The PTI marchers, who were in D-Chowk most of Wednesday night, had by this time entered Islamabad's prohibited Red Zone, which is home to several sensitive buildings, including Supreme Court, PM House, US Embassy. They managed to enter despite heavy security. They later started dispersing.

In his speech at Jinnah Avenue, Imran Khan said he had reached Islamabad after 30 hours of traveling from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"The government tried every method to crush our Azadi March. They used teargas on peaceful protests, our homes were raided and our privacy was violated. However, I have seen the nation free itself of [the] fear of slavery," he said.

Imran Khan said three PTI workers lost their lives in Karachi, while two workers were thrown off Ravi Bridge and thousands others were arrested. Giving a deadline to the government to announce the date for fresh polls in the country, Imran Khan said he is giving the government this time to announce a general election in June. "My message for the imported government is to dissolve assemblies and announce elections, otherwise I will come back again to Islamabad after six days," he added.

SC bars govt from action against...

FROM PAGE 01

The government maintained that the protesters caused damage to private and public properties.

At the offset of hearing, Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Ashtar Ausaf said the Islamabad High Court bar association had filed a petition for protection of human rights and in light of it, PTI was allowed staging a peaceful protest. However, he said that Imran Khan misled the protesters by propagating that the top court had permitted them to protest. The chief justice remarked that they were not conducting the hearing for leveling allegations against anybody, maintaining that the Supreme Court safeguards the Constitution and the order was given because it could see the law being violated. The chief justice said there could be a possibility that the message delivered to Imran Khan was misinterpreted. Remarking on what happened following the court's orders, the chief justice said that it was learned that shellings were done, and some protesters inflicted injuries too.

Roma beat Feyenoord to win Europa Conference League

Roma, whose only previous continental title was the old Fairs Cup in 1961, held off a spirited comeback from their Dutch opponents, who were twice denied by the woodwork in the second half

NICOLA Zaniolo's goal earned AS Roma its first major European title in more than 60 years after a 1-0 win over Feyenoord in the Europa Conference League final in Albania, completing a unique European trophy haul for Jose Mourinho.

Roma coach Mourinho, who had previously won the Champions League, Europa League and the UEFA Cup with other clubs, can now add the third-tier European title — the Italian side's first trophy in 14 years — to his medal tally. The 22-year-old Zaniolo earned Roma victory on Wednesday with an expertly-taken finish in the 32nd minute, as he became the first Italian to score in a European final since Filippo Inzaghi against Liverpool in the 2007 Champions League. Roma, whose only previous continental title was the old Fairs Cup in 1961, held off a spirited comeback from their Dutch opponents, who were twice denied by the woodwork in the second half. That ensured that Mourinho became the first manager to win a European trophy with four different clubs, after previous successes at Porto, Inter Milan and Manchester United. "We are a real team, we



proved that. Now we have to celebrate and then start again, which is always difficult after a great victory, but a real team wins, celebrates and starts again," Roma captain Lorenzo Pellegrini told Sky Sport Italia. "I said yesterday that I never would've im-

agined at the age of 25 to achieve this with the Roma jersey and the captain's armband. It is a wonderful moment." "Today wasn't work, this was history," Mourinho said. "Either you write it or you don't and we wrote it. I've been at Roma

for 11 months and I realised the moment I arrived what it meant — that they were waiting for this." Given that both Roma and Feyenoord came into the contest having already secured Europa League football for next season through their domestic league position, it was all about the glory in Tirana. Early on it looked like there was only going to be one winner, as Roma dominated the opening exchanges, without troubling Feyenoord goalkeeper Justin Bijlow, playing his first match since March 10.

One chance was all they needed to hold the lead at the interval, with Zaniolo brilliantly bringing the ball down on his chest before slotting home his first goal in all competitions since a hat-trick in the quarter-finals against Bodo/Glimt. Zaniolo also became the youngest Italian to score in a major European final since Alessandro Del Piero against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League in May 1997. Feyenoord, looking to be the first Dutch club to win a European competition in 20 years, since their 2002 UEFA Cup triumph, failed to really test Rui Patricio in the Roma goal in the opening period.

Briefs

US armed to the teeth: More guns than civilians

MONITORING DESK

NEW YORK: The US is the only country in the world where civilian guns outnumber people, said the Switzerland-based Small Arms Survey (SAS). It is also the only country where at least one mass shooting takes place every year, said CNN citing the survey. There are 120.5 guns for every 100 Americans, the report said, which are shocking figures in the backdrop of Tuesday's mass shooting at the Robb Elementary School in Texas which killed 21 people, most of them children. Falkland Islands comes after the US with an estimated 62 guns per 100 people, and war-weary Yemen has the third highest gun ownership rate with 53 guns per 100 people. On the contrary, in some countries, such as South Korea and Japan, this rate hovered around 0.2, near zero, it reported.

The SAS research estimates that Americans own 393 million of 857 million civilian guns available, and this figure corresponds to 46% of the global civilian gun cache. It also draws attention to the matter that the regular mass shootings are "a uniquely American phenomenon." The survey underlined that mass shooting refers to events in which at least four people were killed, excluding the perpetrator and that definition does not include profit-driven criminal activity, family violence, and state-sponsored violence. The CNN report noted that four out of every 100,000 people in the US were victims of gun violence in 2019, which is 18 times the average rate in other developed countries. While the US population corresponded to 4% of the world population, the suicides by firearms in the US add up to 44% of global suicides by firearm in 2019, it said.

Armenian artist asserts atrocities in Karabakh

WEB DESK

BAKU: Every Azerbaijani knows, either through personal experience or through the stories of loved ones, how cruel and inhumane Armenian crimes can be. History has taught us about numerous bloody massacres, genocides and crimes against humanity. For decades Armenia has deliberately targeted peaceful civilians and civilian infrastructure in Azerbaijan, forcefully displacing thousands of people. The Khojaly genocide committed by Armenian troops during the first Karabakh war in the early 1990s was one of the darkest chapters in our history. At least 613 people were killed as a result of the massacre. This heinous crime was preceded by a series of others. Armenia used the same terror tactics it used in 1992, deliberately targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure in Azerbaijani cities such as Ganja, Barda, and Tartar, which were located far from the conflict zone.

Twitter agrees to pay fine over privacy violations

CALIFORNIA: Global social media company Twitter agreed to pay a \$150 million fine over the alleged misuse of personal data over six years in order to help sale of targeted advertisements. "From at least May 2013 until at least September 2019, Twitter misrepresented to users of its online communication service the extent to which it maintained and protected the security and privacy of their nonpublic contact information," said a complaint filed on Wednesday. "Specifically, while Twitter represented to users that it collected their telephone numbers and email addresses to secure their accounts, Twitter failed to disclose that it also used user contact information to aid advertisers in reaching their preferred audiences," said the filing in the US District Court Northern District of California. — Agencies



DAVOS: Foreign minister of Pakistan Bkhalw Bhutto Zardari meets his Iranian counterpart, Hossein Amir Abdullahian on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum at Davos. — DNA

Kazakh President visits Bishkek to cement ties

NEWS DESK

NUR-SULTAN: President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev made an official visit to Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on May 26, where he met with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov. More about where the bilateral ties between the two neighbors stand and what comes next in the latest analytical article of Kazinform. In Bishkek, the two heads of state discussed the development of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz strategic partnership focusing on strengthening political dialogue, and building trade and economic, investment, and cultural and humanitarian cooperation. Tokayev's visit to Bishkek, the second since he assumed the presidential office in June 2019, saw the signing of 10 bilateral documents, including on the investment in the infrastructure of the industrial trade and logistics complex in Karasu and Ak Tylek road checkpoints, on cooperation in the field of aviation search and rescue, and on the prevention and mitigation of natural fires in the border areas. Thirty years of bilateral ties. This year, the two countries mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Diplomatic relations were established on October 15, 1992. According to Tokayev, over this period, the friendship has become even stronger, and political dialogue based on mutual trust has been established at all levels. "This visit has a special meaning. I am confident that it will strengthen our strategic partnership and give a strong impetus to further cooperation between our countries. There is no doubt that Kyrgyzstan is the closest state to Kazakhstan in all respects," Tokayev told Japarov during their narrow format meeting. During the meeting in an expanded format, Tokayev commended the implemen-



tation of agreements reached during Japarov's visit to Kazakhstan in March 2021 - intensifying contacts between the two governments, creating a modern Kordai - Ak Jol border crossing point, strengthening military-technical cooperation, providing regular humanitarian aid, and effective work on the exchange of electricity. Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan seek to double trade turnover. Intensifying cooperation, including in trade and investments, is ever more important considering the geopolitical turbulence, according to Tokayev. He called on the sides to intensify investment cooperation, proposing to study proposals and form a list of promising projects. One of them could be the joint construction of hydropower facilities in Kyrgyzstan - Kambarata-1 hydropower plant. Kazakhstan is one of the leading trade, economic, and investment partners of Kyrgyzstan. Since 2005 the volume

of direct investments from Kazakhstan to Kyrgyzstan reached \$1.3 billion, and \$97.1 million from Kyrgyzstan to Kazakhstan. Among the latest projects will be the construction of a solar power plant in the Issyk-Kul region involving the Kazakh capital with the cost estimated to reach US\$300 million. Last year, trade turnover between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan reached \$970.8 million, an increase of 14 percent (625.2 million) compared to 2020. Between January to March alone, trade turnover was \$206.3 million, up 2.9 percent from the same period in 2020 (\$200.6 million). Japarov and Tokayev set an ambitious goal to double trade turnover to US\$2 billion. There are 233 joint ventures with the participation of Kyrgyz capital in Kazakhstan, mostly in wholesale and retail trade, construction, car sales, cattle breeding, cultivation of grain, and leguminous crops. On

the other hand, there are 373 joint ventures with the participation of the Kazakh capital registered in Kyrgyzstan, mostly engaged in financial activities, food production, trade, repair of cars, household goods and personal items, and transport and communications. Tokayev is optimistic that the industrial trade and logistics complex, whose construction kicked off today, will open new opportunities for diversification of cooperation in industry and trade. Saparov, in turn, indicated the light and food industry, mining, processing of agricultural products, and the construction of small and medium hydropower plants as promising areas for cooperation. He said that his March 2021 visit to the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), where businesses had a chance to meet, intensified cooperation. The 10th meeting of the Intergovernmental Council on April 29 in Bishkek saw the signing of an agreement that will establish the Green Finance Centre under the auspices of AIFC in Bishkek.

Tokayev assured the Kyrgyz leadership that Kazakhstan stands firm in its commitment to protecting the interests of foreign investors. "We are ready to export industrial products and other goods. There will be support from KazExport [a state-owned company overseeing the exports]. Kyrgyzstan also exports a number of goods to our country. In this regard, we agreed to make the most of the available opportunities," said Tokayev during a joint press briefing the same day. The country's trade and people-to-people contacts have significantly benefited from the modernization of Kordai border crossing point in 2021. The same upgrade will follow for other border crossing points. "The main task is to reduce the number of inspections and eliminate traffic congestion at the border," said the President of Kazakhstan.

NATO chief expresses understanding of Turkiye's concerns

AGENCIES

BRUSSELS: The NATO chief on Thursday expressed understanding of Turkiye's security concerns on Finland and Sweden's membership bids, saying Ankara is a "very important" ally of the alliance. "When an ally raises a problem, you have to solve it. It's always been done that way," Jens Stoltenberg told Spanish media, recalling Greece's veto on North Macedonia, which cost the country more than 10 years to join NATO. "No one has suffered as many terrorist attacks as Turkey," Stoltenberg reiterated. His remarks came ahead of his Madrid visit next week, where a NATO summit will take place in late June. Differentiating Kurds from listed terror groups, he said: "You speak of Kurds, but we must accept that there are several Kurdish groups and the PKK is on the list of terrorist organizations of the European Union." On the participation of Stockholm and Helsinki in the upcoming NATO summit, he said they will attend as guests, since it is "difficult" for them to consolidate their aspirations as candidate countries if they do not respond to Turkiye's demands before June 28. Sweden and Finland formally applied to join NATO last week, a decision spurred by Russia's war on Ukraine, which began on Feb. 24. But Turkiye, a longstanding member of the alliance, has voiced objections to their membership bids, criticizing the countries for tolerating and even supporting terrorist groups. Ankara hosted on Wednesday consultations with Swedish and Finnish delegations on their NATO applications in the capital.

Quality control to accelerate Pak mangoes entering Chinese market

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Quality control will accelerate Pakistan mangoes entering Chinese market, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. According to Adnan Hafeez, director of Imperial Ventures (Pvt) Ltd, "Quality control is the keyword of this year's mango export." The first shipment of Pakistani mangoes of the present season will arrive in Kunming, China this week. Adnan told Gwadar Pro that this time there are 4 tons of mango, half of which will be sent to Chinese wholesalers and retailers as samples. "We have already got connected with

some big supermarkets and e-commerce platforms in China, including Walmart, JD.com and FreshHema. The current issue is that they stressed the outlook of mango rather than its taste. Our mango tastes very good, but its outlook is not advantageous." Noticing the requirements, Adnan and his team are trying their best to improve the mango's outlook. "We need to follow the strict processing guidelines from picking to transporting." "This year, to guarantee the mango's outlook and the quality, we are doing everything by ourselves. We need to sort out clean and beautiful mangoes manually. We also rent a licensed mango processing factory for the whole

mango season. We're spending a lot of time, money and manpower on this," Adnan added. "If the samples get accepted, we can expand our Chinese market and increase the frequency of our regular mango shipments till September." Last year, Pakistan's mango export was 150,000 tons, while its export to China was only 50 tons. Adnan aims to double this amount to 100 tons this year. "Right now we have the largest mango export market in Europe, the UK, and the middle east. Considering China's large population, I believe that China will be one of the largest markets for Pakistan's mango in the coming five to ten years. I will work continuously to explore the Chinese market." Adnan said.

Karot HPP will provide Rs 3.9 billion free electricity till COD

FOREIGN DESK

ISLAMABAD: "Until the Karot Hydropower Project (KHPP) reaches commercial operation date (COD), the project will provide free electricity worth Rs 3.9 billion to the

national grid," said Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during his visit to KHPP, according to Gwadar Pro. The Prime Minister thanked the Chairman of the China Three Gorges Corporation for the generous offer which will save around Rs 4 billion for Pakistan's

national treasury. "Free electricity until COD achievement, is something unprecedented in Pakistan's history," Shabbaz Sharif said. According to the Prime Minister, if this is compared with coal-generated or furnace oil-generated power, then the amount is almost Rs 9 billion.

US foreign policy 'taken hostage' by Israel: Iran

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said Thursday Tehran is committed to reaching a deal during the Vienna nuclear talks, adding that US interests and foreign policy have been "taken hostage" by Israel. Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, he accused the Biden administration of being "indecisive" in talks to salvage the landmark 2015 nuclear deal following the previous administration's maximum pressure policy against Iran. The annual event brings together over 2,000 representatives of governments, business organizations,

civil society and media leaders to discuss global challenges. In a session moderated by CNN's Fareed Zakaria, Iran's top diplomat said Tehran has put forward a number of initiatives to Washington to salvage the nuclear deal, but the Biden administration has been dragging its feet over them. The marathon talks in Vienna to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, also known as joint comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA), are currently stalled due to key disagreements between Tehran and Washington. Amir-Abdollahian said the pause in the talks has been due to "lack of economic guarantees" from the US and due to the fact that the new administration has followed the Donald Trump administration's pol-

icy against Iran. He said Iran must enjoy "full economic benefits" of the deal, and the agreement must facilitate the country's economic and trade activity with the world. The top diplomat, referring to one of the key sticking points in the talks - de-listing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from foreign terrorist organizations (FTO) - said the issue has been magnified by Israel. He said the "main factor" is the full economic benefits of the deal for Iran and its people, while adding that the Biden administration must "show goodwill" in de-listing IRGC. Amir-Abdollahian added that Iran has endured sanctions for 40 years and has "other different options" on the table if the

talks in Vienna do not lead to a "good and lasting agreement." He also spoke about tension-easing talks with regional arch-foe Saudi Arabia, saying the two sides have made small but significant progress and have agreed to hold talks at the level of foreign ministers in near future. The talks between Tehran and Riyadh have been underway since April last year, brokered by the Iraqi government. Despite pauses and tensions, both sides have noted progress. Amir-Abdollahian said Iran has "always kept its door open" for Saudi Arabia and is ready for normalization of ties with the Gulf neighbor, adding that it will contribute to stability in the region.

His remarks came a day after Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan told the Davos forum that progress had been made in talks with Iran, adding that "hands remain stretched" to Tehran. Commenting on Russia's war in Ukraine, Amir-Abdollahian said Iran condemns the war, as well as conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, without mentioning or condemning close ally Moscow. He said Tehran is willing to mediate between the two warring countries. On Yemen, the top Iranian diplomat said all Yemeni parties "should play a role" in determining the future of their country. He also denounced what he called "US support for terrorists" in the war-ravaged Arab country.

Erdogan, Macron discuss Swedish, Finnish NATO bids

MONITORING DESK

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and French President Macron discussed Sweden and Finland's NATO bids, the Russia-Ukraine war and regional developments in a phone call, the Presidency's Directorate of Communications said Thursday. Erdogan told his French counterpart that Turkey wants immediate peace between Russia and Ukraine and that Ankara will continue to promote dialogue and diplomacy in this regard. He also told Macron that Sweden and Finland's contact with individuals and so-called institutions affiliated with the PKK terrorist organization's Syrian offshoot YPG contradicts the spirit of the alliance under NATO. On Wednesday, Swedish state TV SVT aired an interview with a PKK-affiliated terrorist ringleader in Syria. Turkish security forces also found Swedish-made weapons during recent counter-terrorism operations. Listed as a terrorist group by Turkey, the United States and the European Union - of which Sweden and Finland are members - the PKK has waged an insurgency against Turkey since 1984. Tens of thousands of people have died in the conflict. Among other things, Ankara claimed that Sweden had decided to provide \$376 million to support the PKK's Syrian offshoot, the YPG, in 2023 and that it had provided military equipment to them, including anti-tank weapons and drones. Turkey echoed concerns over Swedish and Finnish countries' support for terrorist groups during the meeting between Turkish officials on Wednesday.

Kazakhstan, Malaysia discuss bilateral coop

NUR-SULTAN: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan Adil Tursunov held talks with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Kamarudin Jaffar, who arrived on a visit to Nur-Sultan, Kazinform cites the press service of the Kazakh MFA. The interlocutors discussed issues of bilateral political, trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation, interaction within the framework of international organizations. The parties "checked the clock" on the organization of mutual visits at the highest and high levels, bilateral political consultations and meetings of the Joint Trade and Economic Committee. Following the talks, the deputy foreign ministers of the two countries noted the achievements over 30 years of establishing diplomatic relations, and also expressed their desire to further strengthen mutually beneficial cooperation between Kazakhstan and Malaysia. — Agencies

Bulgaria uses violent measures against migrants

SOFIA: Bulgarian border authorities have been attacking Afghan and other irregular migrants using police dogs and other violent methods to illegally push them back in the Turkish territory, an international rights group said Thursday. Human Rights Watch said that the migrants reported to have been beaten, robbed and stripped. "Bulgarian authorities are brutally and summarily pushing back migrants and asylum-seekers across the land border with Turkey," said Michelle Randhawa, refugee and migrant rights officer at HRW. "The European Union should ensure that Bulgaria immediately stops the illegal and dehumanizing pushbacks at its borders and allows asylum-seekers access to fair asylum procedures." Bulgaria's government didn't immediately respond to HRW's report. But officials have previously denied mistreating migrants. HRW said it interviewed 15 Afghans between November and April who told the organization that they were "victims of 19 pushbacks by Bulgarian authorities from Bulgaria to Turkey." — Agencies

Briefs

Punjab govt sacks 30 officers linked with PTI, PML-Q

DNA

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Thursday sacked 30 law officers linked to PML-Q and PTI parties and appointed 29 new law officers belonging to the PML-N. Those who were sacked included eight additional advocate generals and 22 assistant advocate generals. The Law Secretary has issued the notification of new law officers and de-notified the law officers from PTI and PML-Q.

Officers sacked were: Assistant advocate general Mrs. Alia Ijaz, Waqar Saeed Khan, Junaid Razaq, Azra Israr, Assistant advocate general Syed Al Hassan Jafari, Jam Khalid Farid, Zafar Rahim Sekhira Sulaiman Alam Khan, Assistant advocate general Amjad Ali Ansari, Qaiser Abbas Shah and Shams Tabriz, Assistant advocate general Irfan Ahmad Khan Niazi, Aziz-ur-Rehman, Ahmad Nadeem Ghahla, Malik Shaikat Mahmood, Assistant advocate general Muhammad Imtiaz Mirali, Shehryar Ahsan Mehboob, Prince Khushbakt Khan, Assistant advocate general Jam Muhammad Afzal, Jam Abdul Malik, Shahid Mahmood and Malik Shah Nawaz.

Russian shelling kills 4 in Kharkiv: governor

AGENCIES

KYIV: Four persons were killed in fresh Russian shelling of Ukraine's second city Kharkiv, a regional official said Thursday, where many people have returned after Russia's attempts to capture the city were repelled.

"The occupiers are again shelling the regional centre," the governor of the Kharkiv region, Oleg Sinchukov, said on Telegram. "According to preliminary information, seven people were injured. Unfortunately, four were killed." "We ask residents of Kharkiv and surroundings to be in shelters," he said. He said information about the shelling was being clarified and did not give details of where the strikes hit. An AFP reporter in Kharkiv said the shelling hit the northern residential district of Pavlove Pole and saw plumes of smoke rising from the area.

Kharkiv, in the north-east corner of Ukraine near the Russian border, was heavily shelled by Moscow's forces at the start of their invasion, which began on February 24. After heavy battles and severe destruction of the city, Ukrainian forces regained control of Kharkiv.

Shutdown, shelling, arrests in IIOJK

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), shutdown is being observed for the second consecutive day on Thursday against the Indian court's unjust verdict of sentencing pro-freedom fighter Yasin Malik to life imprisonment.

According to Kashmir Media Service, shops and other business centres were closed in Maisuma, Abi Guzar, Lal Chowk, downtown areas of the city and in Tral. Yesterday, Indian police used brute force and fired shells on anti-India and pro-freedom protesters in Maisuma and other areas of Srinagar. Scores of people, including women, assembled at Yasin Malik's residence at Maisuma, a short distance from Lal Chowk city centre, and raised slogans in support of the Hurriyat leader.

Indian forces had been deployed in strength in several areas of the territory to thwart anti-India protests. Meanwhile, Indian police during house raids arrested 10 youth on charges of anti-India sloganeering and protests in Maisuma yesterday.



ISLAMABAD: Zahid Latif Khan Chairman REIT, Zafar Altaf, Ch. Nadeem Rauf and others presenting a bouquet to the key holder of Roza-e-Rasool during his visit to Islamabad Stock Exchange. He remained with the business community for a while and expressed his best wishes for Pakistan and people of Pakistan. – DNA

Africa and Pakistan have all reasons to boost cooperation

Ambassador of Morocco Mohammed Karmoune who is also the Dean of the African Group says Pakistan has announced the opening of six new embassies in Africa which is a welcome step

MAHNOOR ANSAR / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco Mohammed Karmoune who is also the Dean of the African Group, has said the 54 countries of the African Continent have signed in Kigali on March 2018, the African Continental Free Trade Area with the aim of creating a single market for goods and services. This trade bloc forms now the world's largest free trade area that constitutes a market of 1.4 billion consumers.

As of the beginning of May 2022, 43 of the 54 signatories (80%) have ratified the African Continental Free Trade Area, but the Agreement entered into force on 30 May 2019, 30 days after the 22nd instrument of ratification was deposited with the African Union Commission. He expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of the Africa Day event organized at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Ambassador Karmoune further said, as we go back to history, we recall the year 1961 when heroic, distinguished late leaders of African continent gathered in Casablanca to go over and trace the political situation prevailing at that time in Africa and launch the spirit of Pan-Africanism, the said conference called the *GROUP OF CASABLAN-

CA* was the prelude of the birth of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. Today is indeed an opportunity to continue exploring the best ways and means to consolidate the Continent's relations with Pakistan. This large market is indeed an opportunity for Africa and Pakistan to boost their economic cooperation, he added. He said, many important initiatives have been made to unlock the potential of investments and trade between Africa and Pakistan.

'I am referring here to the policy of engagement with Africa initiated since 2017 to deepen Pakistan's presence in Africa in terms of diplomacy, trade and investment. Pakistan organized at the end of January 2020, the first Trade Development Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, to highlight the potential of trade relations with African countries. The second Pakistan-Africa Trade Development Conference was organized in Lagos, Nigeria from 23-25 November 2021'. On the Diplomatic front, the Ambassador said, Pakistan has announced the opening of six new embassies in Africa.



As African group of Ambassadors and Heads of Missions in Islamabad, we welcome these initiatives, which have had a positive impact on the trade volume between Pakistan and Africa. From 2019 to 2020, trade exchange between Africa and Pakistan had reached 4.18 billion dollars.

Now after these two trade development conferences, we would like to see Pakistani investors overcoming their timidity and engage in joint ventures with African investors in the fields of agriculture, industry, mine extraction, banking, information technology, digital economy, renewable energy, textiles, pharmaceutical industry, agro-food, transport and infrastructure, etc. More actions are needed to boost investments and to further increase trade volume between Africa and Pakistan. I am thinking, for example of the following actions:

1-Organizing more trade fairs in both Africa and Pakistan to give the chance to business people to meet, to exchange information and to partner in different economic fields. Cooperation can further be reinforced by fo-

cus on areas of mutual interests

2- Organizing seminars between African Chambers of Commerce and Industry and their Pakistani partners to exchange information on business opportunities in both Africa and Pakistan and to share expertise in different domains.

3-Considering seriously the creation of Joint ventures with African businesses in order to strengthen the mutually beneficial partnership between Pakistan and Africa.

4-Promoting the establishment of direct maritime links between Africa and Pakistan in order to facilitate trade exchange.

5-promoting direct air link to facilitate people's mobility and visits of business delegations.

6- Pakistan and African countries have also to examine the possibility of establishing a financial institution, which will accompany businesses in their development.

7-Promotion of cultural cooperation between Pakistani and African universities. The cultural cooperation and people to people exchange will further promote friendship and understanding.

8- Promotion exchange of visits between business delegations in the two directions.

9. Considering flexibility in issuance of visas for businessmen in order to facilitate their mobility between Africa and Pakistan and vice versa.

FM Bilawal for strengthening Pak-Iran ties

DAVOS: On the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari met with Iranian Foreign Minister Dr. Hossein Amir Abdollahian on Thursday. During the meeting, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to strengthen Pak-Iran fraternal ties in all areas of mutual interest. He emphasised that there existed vast scope in bilateral trade and economic cooperation which should be tapped by both sides through various institutional mechanisms and innovative ways to identify new sectors. The Foreign Minister underscored the importance of earliest completion of border markets to improve livelihood in the border region. The Foreign Minister appreciated Iran's steadfast support for the Kashmir cause, especially at the Supreme Leader level. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif interacting with the representatives of law enforcement agencies. – DNA

Pak seeks to strengthen economic ties with France

The Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar said that in recent years, trade between Pakistan and France has been steadily increasing

NEWS DESK

PARIS: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar said that Pakistan has a historically friendly and cooperative relationship with France and would like to further strengthen and diversify bilateral trade and economic ties in the years to come. He was speaking with French Foreign Minister for Trade and Attractions Mr. Frank Rister. Mr. Muhammad Amjad Aziz Qazi, Charge d'Affaires was also present during the meeting.

The Federal Minister said that in recent years, trade between Pakistan and France has been steadily increasing. He emphasized that Pakistan's strategic location, rapidly developing infrastructure and the government's free investment policies make Pakistan an attractive destination for foreign investors. He said that since its inception in 2014, the

GSP Plus Scheme has been instrumental in creating a conducive environment for the implementation of 27 international conventions on human rights, labor rights, environment and good governance in the beneficiary countries. It has also helped increase employment opportunities, especially for women and Pakistan's economy, especially in the export sector. Syed Naveed Qamar appreciated the support of European member countries, especially France, for the acquisition of GSP Plus status in 2014 and hoped that the forthcoming GSP Plus 2024 would further strengthen the mutually ben-



eficial trade relations between Pakistan and the EU. Will do He further said that Pakistan was keen to remain constructively aligned with the European Union and its member countries to further enhance our trade relations and to cooperate in safeguarding and promoting the social, economic and other rights of the Pakistani people. Syed Naveed Qamar said that France is dominated by textile sector over Pakistan's exports and there is immense potential for diversifying trade in other sectors like agriculture, dairy, clean energy, digital economy and startups.

Earlier, the Commerce Minister called on Senator Pascal Elizard, President of Pakistan-France Friendship Group in the French Senate and discussed issues related to Pakistan-France bilateral relations.

He also visited the headquarters of MEDEF International (the largest association of French companies) where he was received by Deputy CEO Geraldine Lambley.

He spoke to representatives of French businesses who are already working in Pakistan or interested in doing business with Pakistan. These included Axens, Bureau Veritas, L'Oréal, Sanofi, Phenixya - Thomson Broadcast, Stellantis, Adit and Sergi France. Later, the Federal Minister also spoke to the media representatives and briefed them on the objectives and achievements of his visit.

It should be noted that the Federal Minister is currently on an official visit to the major capitals of the European Union, including Brussels, The Hague and Berlin.

Naval Chief stresses military jointness for success

DNA

QUETTA: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi visited Command & Staff College, Quetta and addressed the student officers. Upon arrival, the Naval Chief was received by the Commandant Command & Staff College, Quetta.

While addressing the Staff Course participants, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi paid rich tribute to the sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces in defence of the country. Chief of the Naval Staff emphasized to keep abreast with the latest trends and further make endeavors to deal with emerging complex and dynamic security environment. The Admiral reiterated that jointness remained central to the modern concept of military operations as jointness ensure success in today's warfare. Naval Chief highlighted that in prevalent geo-strategic milieu Pakistan Navy is fully cognizant of maritime security challenges evolving under the ambit of Hybrid Warfare. The Admiral further emphasized that Pakistan Navy is always ready to tackle the maritime security challenges facing the country by active support of Sister Services.

Government committed to revive IMF programme: Ministry

ISLAMABAD: The government is committed to revive the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme and put the economy of the country back on a sustainable growth path, Finance Ministry said here Thursday. In a statement issued after the conclusion of talks with the fund, the finance ministry said, Pakistan's team led by Finance Minister Miftah Ismail held final meeting with the IMF Mission at Doha on the seventh review.

The week-long consultations reviewed fiscal and monetary situation for Fiscal year 2022 and proposed measures for FY2023.

The fund expressed concern on the fiscal and current account situation arising from government's actions especially electricity and fuel subsidies and other subsidies, it added. The meetings identified areas of divergence and corrections required in the current account and fiscal deficit. The IMF team emphasized the importance of rolling back fuel and power subsidies, which were given by the previous administration in contravention of its own agreement with the fund. – APP

Israeli court upholds non-Muslim prayer ban at Al-Aqsa

WEB DESK

TEL AVIV: An Israeli appeals court has overturned a lower court ruling questioning the legal basis of a longstanding ban on non-Muslim prayer at the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem.

"The special sensitivity of the Temple Mount cannot be overstated," Judge Einat Avman-Moller said in her ruling on Wednesday, using the Hebrew name for the compound. The judge said Jewish worship there "should be superseded by other interests, among them the safeguarding of public order".

Earlier this week, a magistrate court ruled in favour of three Jewish appellants who had been banned from the Old City by police for 15 days for praying at the site, stirring Palestinian fears of attempts to change the sensitive status quo at the site. The Al-Aqsa Mosque compound is located inside the landmark Old City. The vast majority of the international community does not recognise Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem and considers it illegally occupied territory.