



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, May 31, 2022

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Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

Baligh takes oath as Governor

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday approved the appointment of Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman as Governor Punjab. The president accorded his approval on the advice of the prime minister in terms of Article 48 (1) read with Article 101 (1) and Article 101 (5) of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Earlier, President Dr Arif Alvi appointed Babar Hassan Bharwana and Justice (R) Ikramullah Khan as members of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) respectively.

SC verdict doesn't affect me

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz has claimed that the Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 63(A) is not valid on his election to the chief minister's slot. The statement came with Hamza's 16-page written response submitted to the LHC against the petitions challenging his election as the province's CM. "The election on Punjab CM's slot was staged in line with the high court's orders and as per the law and the Constitution," Hamza stated in the reply, adding that the interpretation of Article 63(A) does not apply to the polls since the apex court's judgement came later.

Adnan Aurangzeb dies

ISLAMABAD: Former MNA Mian Adnan Aurangzeb has died in an accident. Adnan was a well known figure of the country. He was equally well respected among the diplomatic community as well. President Dr. Arif Alvi in his Tweet expressed his heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of Adnan. The President said that he was a great man and a great friend. President Alvi said when it comes to promotion of tourism in Swat Adnan had played a central role. His death was indeed an irreparable loss to this country and people of Pakistan. - DNA

PM seeks more Chinese investment

The premier says that Pakistan looks forward to seek support from China in every walk of life

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan doesn't want handouts, but investments from its Chinese friends, says Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The premier said that the friendship between Pakistan and China's unwavering friendship has weathered storms and strengthened over time. He praised China for progressing in various sectors and lifting numerous above the poverty level during the last three decades. Pakistan has China as a model to emulate and replicate its development reforms, PM Shehbaz Sharif said during a meeting with the representatives of Chinese companies investing in Pakistan on Monday. The premier said that Pakistan looks forward to seek support from China in every walk of life and it will benefit from China's experience in the fields of industries and agriculture. Pakistan has resolved that we will meet all the challenges however difficult they are and take Pakistan towards progress, the premier said. "For this, Pakistan needs real support from our Chinese friends, not in terms of money, aid or handouts, but in terms of investment, trade and expertise." PM Shehbaz Sharif said that China is the most reliable friend of Pakistan.

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PM to depart for 3-day Turkey visit today

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will pay a three-day visit to Turkey from Tuesday to hold talks with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on bilateral relations and exchange views on regional and international issues. This will be the prime minister's first visit to Turkey since assuming office. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was the first world leader to call the prime minister on 11 April 2022 to felicitate him. The two leaders also spoke on telephone on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. The prime minister will be accompanied by a high-level delegation including ministers, Special Assistants to the PM (SAPMs), and senior officials. A business delegation from Pakistan comprising representatives of leading companies across various sectors will travel separately to

Continued on Page 06

Imran seeks SC's protection for march

"If Supreme Court does not give protection then we will prepare plan for this"



BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan has said that if the Supreme Court did not provide protection to his party for holding yet another long march to Islamabad then they will formulate a "different strategy" to overcome obstacles. "If Supreme Court does not give protection and they [government] create hurdles for [PTI protesters] then I am announcing here that we will prepare plan for this," he said while addressing the lawyers' convention in Peshawar on Monday.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting with Chinese investment companies. - DNA

Ukraine Heavy fighting as Russian troops enter key city

MONITORING DESK

KYIV: Russian troops have entered the outskirts of the Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk, according to the regional governor, who described fierce fighting on Monday over the ruins of a city that has become the focus of Moscow's offensive. The European Union has sought to make Moscow pay a heavy price for invading Ukraine, but leaders arriving for a summit acknowledged they were unlikely to pass a new round of sanctions yet, having failed to agree to ban imports of Russian oil. read more Russia has concentrated its firepower on the last major population centre still held by Ukrainian forces in the eastern Luhansk province, in a push to achieve one of President Vladimir Putin's stated objectives after three months of war. read more Incassant shelling has left Ukrainian forces defending ruins in Sievierodonetsk, but their refusal to withdraw has slowed the wider Russian offensive across the Donbas region.

US won't send Ukraine long-range weapons

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Biden on Monday said the United States will not send rocket systems to Ukraine that could potentially reach into Russia, after reports that the administration was preparing to send long-range systems to the besieged European ally.

Continued on Page 06

No change in stance on Palestine

Info Minister says Pakistan's position clear, PTV anchor involved in the tour terminated

STAFF REPORT / DNA



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Monday reiterated that Pakistan was firmly committed to its principled position on the Palestinian issue and Israel. In an important policy statement she said that there had been no change in Pakistan's policy in support of Palestine. The minister said that Pakistan's state policy on Palestine was clear and based on the decrees of the father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam. She said that no policy or action could be adopted against the wishes and aspirations of the people of Pakistan. The Foreign Ministry has made it clear that no delegation from Pakistan had visited Israel.

Pak condemns killing of Kashmiri youth

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns extra-judicial killing of two more Kashmiri youth in staged "cordon-and-search" operation in Pulwama district of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. In a statement on Monday, Foreign Office Spokesperson Asim Iftikhar said that killing spree of Kashmiris by Indian Occupation Forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir intensifies after sentencing of Hurriyat Leader Yasin Malik's in contrived and one-sided case.

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Over 120 illegal Jewish settlers defile Aqsa Mosque - Page 06

CPEC drastically cuts travel time in Pakistan: Report - Page 07

Far-right Israeli attacks show 'Jerusalem Day' reality - Page 08

Senate resolution unanimously condemns Khojaly genocide

It marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Azerbaijan and Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Monday passed a resolution unanimously, to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The resolution stated that the Senate reaffirms the consistent and unshakable support to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan and celebrate with a great joy its historical victory in the year of 2020 that ended up with the liberation of its territories from almost three decade long occupation by the Republic of Armenia. As

well as approving its longstanding and unchanged position, the Senate reaffirms the resolution of 1st February 2012 adopted by the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate condemning the Khojaly Genocide. It further stated that the Senate reiterates its all-over support to the joint steps taken by Azerbaijan and Pakistan in improving economic connectivity, trade, people to people contacts, investment as well as every aspect of bilateral and multilateral cooperation aimed at strengthening prosperity and security of each other. It may be mentioned here that both Pakistan and Azerbaijan enjoy excellent brotherly relations. On May 27, the Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistani Khazar Farhadov hosted a Grand

National day reception in which a large number of guests hailing from all walks of life participated. Besides high level government and military officials, members of the parliament and media persons also attended the reception. The ambassador while speaking on the occasion vowed to give new dimensions to bilateral relations.

Last week, a tree-planting action was held on Friday in Baku on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. The event was organized by the Pakistani Embassy in Baku. Pakistani Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee and Mayor of Baku Eldar Azizov took part in the event.

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Singers, musicians demand release of Afghan singers

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: In a bid to force the government for release of four Afghan singers arrested by Peshawar on Friday, the singers and musicians staged a protest demonstration in front of Peshawar Press Club on Monday morning. A court of law while hearing the case on Saturday, remarked that punishment under 14-Foreign Act is either to be deportation to the country of origin or imprisonment till departure. The main purpose of protest is to save the arrested singers from deportation to Afghanistan whereas Taliban rulers already banned music and art. The court likely to hear bail applications of arrested singers on Tuesday.

The protest call was made by Rashid Khan President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Singers and musicians.

All four singers/musicians have been arrested under 14-Foreign Act by Teh-

kal Police and later on produced before a court of Law. The judge on duty told Afghan singers that either you will be imprisoned for ever (till leaving Pakistan) or deportation to Afghanistan via Torkham. On such grounds, the court adjourned its proceeding till Monday. And on the grounds of bail application, now their case will be heard on Tuesday. Lawyer Faheem Marwat said, "Afghanistan is a conflict zone whereas its people facing threats to their lives and rights. On such grounds he is going to file bail application." Faheem Marwat said that Pakistan is signatory to UN charter pertained to Human Rights at international level.

The protesters also included musicians besides chanting slogans also held the protests amidst light music's. Besides others the protesters were addressed by Rashid Khan, Amjad Shehaz, Ahmad Gul and others, insisting on early release of arrested persons and giving relaxation to the Afghan singers, musi-

cians and artists who slipped into Pakistan after empowering of Taliban in mid of August 2021 last.

Afghan singers Zikar Ullah Wafadar and Ayaz Gul said that around 550 singers, musicians from Afghanistan are scattered throughout Pakistan. Rashid Khan said 200 of them are residing here in Peshawar. Most of them are waiting for Protection in any safe country and for the purpose, they have already filed applications with UNHCR. However, the UNHCR according to Afghan nationals is reluctant to listen them. One of the UNHCR official said, "almost these singers and musicians have been entered Pakistan through valid documents and in accordance to UN, UNHCR couldn't help these people.

Besides Faheem Marwat, Peshawar High Court Bar Association President Rehman Ullah Khan and Tariq Afghans are also going to file bail application in favour of arrested Afghan singers on multiple grounds.



ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi administering oath of office to Senator Shahadat Awan as the Minister of State, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

US Congressman Wittman congratulates Shahbaz, Bilawal

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Congressional representative Rob Wittman said that the US and Pakistan have a long history of cooperation and we are looking forward to improved economic cooperation. He offered best wishes to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto on their success and added that he will visit Pakistan to meet both the leaders. Talking to the President of United Business Group Zubair Tufail, Chairman of US-Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce (USPICC) Siddique Sheikh and Secretary-General of USPICC Malik Sohail he said that he will love to have interaction with the Pakistan business community to find ways for further improvement in bilateral relations. Congressman Rob Wittman said that Pakistan is a great friend of the US. It is a very important country and we hold Pakistan in very high esteem. Rob who serves on the House Committee on Natural Resources and Armed Services has been focused on promoting economic development, improving infrastructure, increasing access to high-speed internet, promoting workforce development and supporting technical education, science, technology, and engineering. Separately, Siddique Sheikh, Zubair Tufail and Malik Sohail also had meetings with various leading businessmen to promote bilateral trade. They invited US businessmen to invest in Pakistan, which is offering one of the best incentives to foreign investors. They also met with the Chairman of Fair-

fax County Jeff McKay and discussed in Fairfax County. He awarded proclamation certificates to Siddique Sheikh, Zubair Tufail, Malik Sohail and Najeeb Aslam, Council Member USPICC.



HC orders removal of IGP Kamran Fazal for duty failure

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Monday expressed his distrust over the performance of Sindh Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kamran Fazal and ordered the authorities concerned to remove him from the post over his failure to discharge duties. The court issued an interim decision over non-production

"All provinces are cooperating for the recovery of the girl"

of Dua Zehra by the IGP for hearing of a petition against her alleged abduction and asked the establishment division secretary to launch an inquiry against him. "Let an action be initiated against you for disobeying the orders," the court addressed Kamran Fazal in its decision and directed the establishment division secretary to review whether Kamran Fazal was eligible for the post of IGP. "We leave this matter to the administration. A competent person should be given the charge of IGP," said the high court in its decision. The court summoned Kamran Fazal in person with affidavit on next hearing, asking the DIG of Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) to ensure recovery of Dua Zehra and produce her at 10:30am on June 3 next. A copy of the court decision was ordered to be sent to the offices of chief secretary and establishment

secretary each. A two-member SHC bench, led by Justice Muhammad Iqbal Kalhoro, issued the decision. On the occasion, Advocate General of Sindh pleaded with the high court to grant one-week time to which the court replied: "You can avoid action if you produce the girl on Friday. If the girl is not produced on Friday, show-cause will be issued and action will be initiated."

Mean-while, IGP Kamran Fazal said while talking to media after hearing of the case that raids were being carried out everywhere for recovery of Dua Zehra. "All provinces are cooperating for the recovery of the girl. We will intensify our efforts and try our best to produce Dua Zehra in the court," he vowed. It is to be noted here that the name of Dua Zehra came to the limelight after the news of her possible abduction from Karachi was broadcasted by national media. It was later discovered that she had eloped with a friend named Zaheer Ahmed (21) to Punjab to marry him. The father of Dua Zehra had filed a petition in the SHC, asking the court to declare his daughter's alleged marriage illegal since she was an underage person. Dua Zehra, on the other hand, claimed that she was 18 years old, and, her parents had got her age.

Steps under way to end crimes: CPO

FAISALABAD: City Police Officer (CPO) Syed Nasir Naqvi has said that strict measures are being taken for elimination of crime and protection of life and property of people in the district. He was talking to complainants during khuli kutchehry [open court] held at Millat Town police station under special initiative of Punjab police, here on Monday. He said that a new complaint cell had been set up at the CPO Office to facilitate people. He said that orders which would be issued on the applications of the complainants during khuli kutchehry would be implemented in letter and spirit. He said that open courts would be held as per schedule regularly in all areas of the district and applications of the complainants would be redressed in three phases. (In A-category) immediate action, (B-category) action after verification and (C-category) action will be taken after complete investigation. He said that police reforms were imperative for redressing the public grievances adding that protection of life and property is among the top most priorities of the Faisalabad police. - APP

Investiture ceremony held

DNA

RAWALPINDI: An investiture ceremony was held at Corps Headquarters Peshawar to confer military awards to Next of Kins of Shuhada and serving military officers to acknowledge their gallantry acts, devotion and sacrifices during service. According to ISPR, Commander Peshawar Corps Lieutenant General Faiz Hamid was the Chief Guest at the occasion. Forty three kins of Shuhada received Tamgha-e-Basalat while Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) was awarded to two officers and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz (Military) to fifteen officers. Earlier this month, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), conferred military awards to Army personnel for their acts of gallantry during operations and meritorious services rendered to the nation. The GHQ Investiture ceremony was held at General Headquarters Rawalpindi. Families of Shuhada also attended the ceremony. 48 officers were awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military). Seven officers, three Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and 30 Soldiers were awarded Tamgha-e-Basalat.

391,317 bags of flour sold out

FAISALABAD: As many as 391,317 bags of 10-kg flour had been sold out at a rate of 490 per bag during the last four days in the division. Commissioner Zahid Hussain said here Monday that 1,795 sales points had been set up in four districts-Jhang, Chinot, Toba Tek Singh and Faisalabad. He said that 296,102 bags of 10-kg had been sold out at government price in district Faisalabad, 23,936 in Toba Tek Singh, 43,586 in Jhand and 23,693 bags had been sold out in Chinot. He said 20-kg flour bags were available at the rate of Rs 980 per bag and 15-kg fine flour at the rate of Rs 1,050 to 1,070. He said wheat was being sold at the rate of Rs 2,460 per mound (40-kg) in the division. - APP

SECP Chairman for promotion of Islamic finance

This would be a preferred approach than to revive the erstwhile 2% flat incentive

ISLAMABAD: Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) Chairman Aamir Khan on Monday suggested for establishment of a high-level Steering Committee tasked with charting an effective roadmap for the future, encompassing all touch points of Islamic finance ecosystem, to promote Islamic finance in the country. He made this suggestion in his keynote address at World Islamic Finance Forum's "Development of Islamic Finance Ecosystem for Global Prosperity" conference, organized by Center of Excellence in Islamic Finance (CEIF), said a Press release issued here. It is notable here that a similar committee was formulated in 2013 for promotion of Islamic banking in Pakistan. Aamir Khan also recommended a tax incentive for companies whose financing needs

are principally met through capital market Islamic instruments. "This would be a preferred approach than to revive the erstwhile 2% flat incentive," he said. He noted that 'protection, justice, fairness and societal well-being' are the key goals of Islamic finance, and SECP has been focused on promotion of Islamic financing with all these goals in sight, said Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) in his keynote address at World Islamic Finance Forum's "Development of Islamic Finance Ecosystem for Global Prosperity" conference, organized by Center of Excellence in Islamic Finance (CEIF) on Tuesday. He shared some of the milestones achieved by SECP in line of Islamic financing, including the listing of PHL energy Sukuk; launch of the first-ever Shariah compliant ETF;

approval of the first-ever Shariah compliant developmental REIT; re-vamping of Commodity Murabaha platform at PMEX; licensing of 2 Shariah-compliant Housing Finance companies; and disbursement of over 43,000 subsidized loans by one Islamic NBMFC. Emphasizing the role of financial sector regulators in promoting a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the Islamic finance space, he shared the example of SECP's regulatory sandbox that encourages young entrepreneurs and nascent startups, to come up with creative solutions & products. He proposed a similar model exclusively for Islamic finance, through collaboration of all relevant regulators. The SECP chairman also said that despite these "isolated successes", structural gaps still exist in the industry, and warrant a concerted

national level thrust to understand and address the complete spectrum of financial needs of the population. He stressed on harnessing the role capital markets, NBFCs and insurance sectors towards the development and expansion of Islamic financial ecosystem. Shedding more light on the structural deficiencies, Khan said that the financial landscape in Pakistan remains bank-centric, while the current policies focused on financial inclusion also remain rather credit-centric. This means that products and solutions like long-term savings, investments, pension, insurance protection, private equity, etc. are not getting adequate attention. Finally, the implementation of inclusion efforts has also mostly stayed limited to the urban centers, except some micro-finance lending activity. - APP

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RCCI to hold moot to sign MoU on economy

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) will hold a day-long conference of political parties' representatives to sign the memorandum of understanding (MOU) on economy. RCCI President Nadeem Rauf while addressing a press conference at chamber house here on Monday said that the Chamber would convene a conference of representatives of all political parties in mid of June 2022 at Pearl Continental Hotel, Rawalpindi. The aim of the conference was to provide a platform for the representatives of all political parties and to prepare a consensus document so that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) can be signed for the Charter of Economy. "The Rawalpindi Chamber demands that all political parties and stakeholders give top priority to the economy and avoid political scoring", he said. The government should review the list of import ban items



as a large number of shipments are on the way or delayed in China due to COVID-19 restrictions. They should be extended till June 15. He said that the chamber will also run a campaign through print,

electronic and social media. He said that the current economic situation is very worrying and concerning for the business community. The Rawalpindi Chamber believes that the solution to the

current economic crisis is for all political parties to unite on the recovery of the economy and sign a memorandum of understanding. Group leader Sohail Altaf said. If political parties make the MoU on

the economy part of their manifesto, the business community will support it in the coming elections. On a question, he said the Chamber of Commerce and the stakeholders have not been consulted regarding the fiscal budget 2022-23. We demand that the budget be prepared through consultation with the stakeholders. Replying another question, he said, the list of imports of luxury items should be reviewed. Many essential items have also come under import ban. It is feared that this move will increase smuggling, he added. Group Leader Sohail Altaf, Dr. Jamal Nasir, President of Small Chamber Sheikh Asif, Representatives of Anjuman-e-Tajir Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, Sheikh Hafeez, Arshad Awan, Tariq Jadoon, Tahir Taj Bhatti, Senior Vice President Asim Malik, Vice President Talat Awan. Former presidents Asad Mashhadi, Dr. Shamail Daud, Zahid Latif Khan, Malik Shahid Saleem, Nasir Mirza, executive members and a large number of importers were also present on the occasion.

**National Days and
Armed Forces Days**

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



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ISLAMABAD: First lady Begum Samina Alvi reviewing a flower arrangement during a workshop held under the aegis of Islamabad Floral Society, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. - DNA

Govt notifies transfer, posting of officers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday notified transfer and posting of two high-rank officers. According to a notification issued by the Establishment Division, Muhammad Tanvir Butt, a BS-21 officer of Secretariat Group, presently posted as Senior Joint Secretary, Finance Division, is posted as Additional Secretary, Finance Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. While, Kausar Ali Khan (OMG/BS-18), Section Officer, Establishment Division is transferred and posted as Section Officer, Parliamentary Affairs Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. - APP

PM, Air Chief discuss PAF's professional matters

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Monday and discussed professional matters pertaining to Pakistan Air Force (PAF). The prime minister reposed full confidence in the professional capabilities of PAF for guarding the aerial frontiers of the country, the PM Office said. - APP

Hurriyat delegation visits families of martyrs in Shopian

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Jammu and Kashmir Political Resistance Movement (JKPRM) visited the residences of recently martyred youth in different areas of Shopian to express solidarity with the victim families. The JKPRM delegation was led by its Chairman Jameel Mir and was comprised of vice chairman Ghulam Hassan, DrMusaib, Faiyaz Ahmed and Ahmed Nazar. The delegation paid rich tributes to martyrs Shakir Ahmed Waza, Afreen Ahmed, NasirWani and Ishfaq Ahmed, said a press release on Monday. They expressed solidarity with the victim families and said that the whole Kashmir was facing terrorism by Indian forces. The delegation said India and its forces have waged a war against people of Kashmir for demanding the right to self-determination. Meanwhile, the delegation also visited the family of prominent martyred commander SadamPadder. - APP

Railways procures modern coaches

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has procured a total of 230 modern passenger coaches not only to modernize the department but also to facilitate the passengers. Talking to APP, an official of the Ministry of Railways said that first batch of the procured coaches would be arriving by the end of May, adding that "The high power locomotives, 4,000 horsepower have been procured to enhance payload for maximizing freight revenue".

He said that the process for installing Radio Frequency Identification System (RFIS) over the railway network had been initiated, which would transform the department on modern lines by effective and efficient monitoring of rolling stock. The process for installing Automatic Train Protection (ATP) in locomotives had been initiated and would be operational after the complete installation of Computer Based Interlocking (CBI) at 31 stations, he added. The official said in order to monitor the train operation 24/7 and to ensure and improve punctuality, the central control office situated in Pakistan Railways Headquarters Office, Lahore as well as the control offices in all seven operational divisions were working. - APP

Bring sugar dealers into tax net; President directs FBR

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to bring into the tax net the unregistered wholesalers, dealers or distributors of sugar. The president passed these directions while disposing of 25 identical representations filed by FBR against the orders of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO), with a direction to the FBR to bring unregistered sugar dealers into the tax net to improve sales tax collection and reporting compliance within 90 days. He observed that despite making huge monetary transactions and the availability of their data with FBR, these unregistered buyers of sugar largely remained outside the tax net and evaded the prime national responsibility of paying taxes. As per details, FTO had initiated an Own Motion investigation against the failure of FBR to bring into the tax net the unregistered buyers of sugar from

sugar mills in the country. The FTO observed that non-NTN holders were buying huge quantities of sugar from mills and their data was fully accessible by the FBR, however this huge potential for tax collection remained unutilized. In its report, the FTO highlighted that a large amount of sugar was supplied by the mills to various unregistered buyers, but the FBR did not pay due attention to broadening the tax base. It further observed that this low-hanging fruit had not yet been harvested and despite making huge monetary transactions, the unregistered buyers of sugar remained out of the tax net. The FTO underscored that unregistered persons were easily identifiable because sugar mills were required to maintain records of supplies made during the tax period and issue tax invoices indicating names, addresses, description, quantity, values of goods, CNIC, or NTN of persons to whom

the supplies were made under the Sales Tax Act of 1990. Furthermore, the Department has full access to various bank accounts of Sugar Mills and thereof the actual buyers can be tracked by analysing major credits appearing in the said accounts. Based on these findings, FTO had directed to enforce compliance after obtaining data of unregistered persons from the sugar mills and sharing it with the concerned Regional Tax Offices to broaden the tax base. The FBR had filed a representation with the President against this order of FTO contesting its jurisdiction of taking suo moto action in such matters. President DrArifAlvi disposed of the matter with the observations that FBR's field formations were not vigilant in collecting information related to unregistered buyers and were content with just whatever was being submitted in the monthly sales tax returns of mills. He regretted that the data of unreg-

istered buyers were not being examined for the purpose of broadening the tax net. He noted that FBR's field formations held jurisdiction over sugar mills and could secure the complete particulars of all buyers by proper and timely analysis of withholding statements. He said that serious negligence and inefficiency on part of the field formations of FBR in the discharge of its duties was tantamount to maladministration. He observed that FTO's recommendations were only a reiteration of the duty of FBR to strictly deal with unregistered sugar dealers to bring them under the tax net. The President held that under section 9 (1) of the FTO's Ordinance, 2000, FTO was authorized to initiate suo moto Investigation against any alleged maladministration on the part of the Revenue Division or any tax employee, therefore, the representations deserved to be disposed of accordingly. - APP

Saima Group, Agha Steel join hands

ISLAMABAD: Agha Steel Industries Limited, a leading steel manufacturing company, has signed an agreement with Saima Group for exclusively providing Green Electric Arc Furnace Technology steel re-bars to its first of a kind Eco-Friendly Green Housing Structure Project, Saima Premium Residency. Agha Steel CEO, Hussain Agha, also expressed his view and noted "We are delighted to be entering into this agreement with Saima Group for providing steel to Pakistan's First Eco-Friendly Green Structure Project. This was a great initiative by Saima Group as the leaders of the industry must play a pivotal role to ensure a sustainable and greener future for our generations to come. This agreement was testament to our aligned visions and ambitions for a Greener Pakistan." Agha Steel Industries led a Green Steel Revolution through sustainability of its energy mix by installing a 2.25 megawatt solar power project and signing a term Sheet with Engro Energy for Renewable Energy. - APP

FGEHA reserves 2% quota for employees' bodies

As many as 8 plots have been reserved in category-I, 12 plots in category-II, 15 plots in category-III, 17 plots of category-IV and 15 plots of category-V were reserved for the employees of constitutional bodies in Green Enclave-I

ISLAMABAD: Federal Government Employee Housing Authority (FGEHA) has reserved two percent quota of the total number of plots of each category for employees of nine constitutional bodies in Green Enclave-I, Bara Kahu Housing scheme Islamabad. As many as 8 plots have been reserved in category-I, 12 plots in category-II, 15 plots in category-III, 17 plots of category-IV and 15 plots of category-V were reserved for the employees of constitutional bodies, an official in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP. About the Sky Garden scheme, he said the revised layout plan of housing was under process for approval. However,

as per tentative plot position in Sky Garden Housing scheme, the two percent quota was also reserved for the employees of constitutional bodies. The official said that around 22 plots of different categories were reserved in the Sky Garden scheme under 2 percent quota for the employees of constitutional bodies. The list of members in waiting list (who deposited down payment and whose cases were likely to mature for allotment) is subject to verification of service particulars from their department including their Regular appointment in BPS as on date of membership etc, he added.

Is it worth coming on roads: IK's demand for new elections

RAMISH KAMRAN

Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan was ousted on Sunday, April 01, 2022, when he lost a vote of confidence in parliament. He was deserted by his coalition partners who blame him for a collapsing economy and failure to deliver on his campaign promises. Anticipating his defeat, Imran Khan, alleged the opposition conspired by the United States to unseat him, on Friday April 08, 2022, he called on his supporters to stage rallies nationwide on Sunday April 10, 2022. "I will not accept an imported government," Khan told the nation in a late-night address. "I'm ready for a struggle." This article is to throw light whether, is it worth coming on roads and demanding a new election? It can be said that yes, it is worth coming on roads and demanding new elections. The main reason is that the present government does not have a clear majority and is in government just for one or two votes. Secondly, new elections would give a clear picture of what the nation is thinking and what does Pakistanis want.

On party level Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has also proved to be an enthusiastic party. Earlier, they were called Mummy Daddy party. By coming on roads Mr. Khan has put his party also on test and successfully completed the campaign. The torture bore by PTI workers in all over the country has given the worker a strength and ambition to fight for their rights. The effects of Long March can be seen in today's parliament joint session. The Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has announced that parliament would decide about the next elections. So, Imran Khan has some how achieved his goal by bringing the government to talk about the elections. Earlier, Vice President of Muslim League (N) Marium Nawaz Sharif in public gathering hinted to leave the government. In another development a former ally of Imran Baluchistan Alliance Party (BAP) is also thinking to withdraw its support from present government. If it is done, then the present Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif would lose the majority and Imran Khan can be Prime Minister again. The writer is an International Relations student

Briefs

PML-N leader pays tribute to Dr AQ Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz Senior Leader Malik Mehran lauded the unforgettable role of late Pakistani Scientist Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan who worked day and night to make Pakistan a nuclear power. Talking to APP here on Monday, he said that as a nation "we must strive hard to make Pakistan an economically independent and welfare state". Congratulating nation on "Youm-e-Takbeer", he said that Pakistan successfully became a nuclear power in the world by detonating five nuclear warheads on May 28, 1998. - APP

Ministry working on National Curriculum Summit

ISLAMABAD: Ministry for Education and Professional Training while considering the significance of the uniform curriculum, was making all-out efforts for calling a National Curriculum Summit to further improve the syllabus.

According to sources, following the directions of Federal Education Minister for Education Rana Tanveer Hussain, all stakeholders and curriculum experts across the country from public/private sector would participate in the proposed summit to give their input for review and wider consensus building on the matter.

Federal Education Minister believed that the entire curriculum required a paradigm shift from learning based on memorization to leaning based on critical thinking and group learning, the sources furthered.

Education ministry, the sources confirmed, will prepare a PC-1 for state-of-the-art Teachers Training Centre, equipped with latest facilities and fulfilling all requirements of public and private sector for training purposes.

However, a nationwide assessment system at Federal level to evaluate the outcomes of educational policies implementation across the country was need of the hour.

Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training was also focusing on the development of the uniform curriculum, they added.

The sources told that PML-N had started four important projects in the past comprising of Curriculum Reforms, Exam Reforms, Madrassa Reforms and Teachers Training Program. The ministry would work hard for education related projects to uplift public sector education system in accordance with the modern requirements. - APP

SMEDA to organize three-day training

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) will organize a three-day workshop on "Sales Force Management for SMEs" for profitable business growth from June 3 to 5.

The session will be organized by SMEDA under National Business Development Programme (NBDDP) for SMEs, to extend non-financial advisory services to small and medium businesses, according to sources in the authority.

The training programme will provide information about strategic role of selling business, effectual sales force management, how sales is different from marketing, diagnostic framework of sales force management and key skills for leading and managing sales teams.

The workshop also provides information of sales force deployment, sale force assessment and evaluation, efficient communication and presentation skills for sale force, and case studies.

The session would be attended by individuals from training services, consultancy services, business support services, SMEs owned and their staff. - APP

Experts believe 'Charter of Economy' is vital for economy

Consistency is the key to economic policy and the present government should honor the commitment made by the previous government as part of the sovereign guarantees of the country and international laws

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Miftah Ismail, Finance Minister, and Shaukat Tarin, former Finance Minister, agreed on forming a Charter of Economy among the political parties while putting aside political differences for sustainable economic growth on a long-term basis. Speaking as chief guest at the webinar on National Dialogue on Economy: The Way Forward for Pakistan, organized by Nutshell Conferences and Corporate Pakistan Group, on Saturday, Miftah Ismail said Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif is ready to sign the Charter of Economy on a minimum agenda despite different ideologies of various political parties. He said the growth in the economy is achievable in Pakistan with its huge size of the population but the sustainable economic growth has been a challenge over the period last years, which needs to be addressed mutually by everyone in the government and the private sector.

Consistency is the key to economic policy and the present government should honor the commitment made by the previous government as part of the sovereign guarantees of the country and international laws. Pakistan needs nearly \$37 billion for the next year for the purpose of paying loans to various agencies and countries, con-



trolling the current account deficit, and building the required foreign exchange reserves but these could be done only with the signing of a program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Going forward, the government will focus on discouraging import-led growth in the economy, whereas the manufacturing sector should be given preference to enhance exports, Miftah said and added. The government will work on revolutionizing the agriculture sector, which will particularly meet the local demand for food items.

He said the government will not impose any ban on traveling, raw materials, and essential items but only on luxury and non-essential items. Also, the tax rate will not be increased on the income of the people, he added.

Former Finance Minister Senator Shaukat Tarin said the Charter of Economy is very important for the country which he proposed many years ago. Political differences should be put aside and the economic agenda should be agreed upon. A few of the next months are difficult ahead but the situation

will be improved after the general elections, he added. Pakistan needs inclusive and sustainable growth for a long period of time. In this regard, the saving-to-GDP ratio and tax-to-GDP ratio should be increased with incentives and schemes in the next five to six years. The gap between export and import stands at 12% which should be reduced to 6% and to zero in the next few years, Tarin added. The former minister suggested the central bank and the government to issue new licenses to banks on the basis of regional boundaries. Ghias Khan, President Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce (OICC) said a long-term and consistent policy is in dispensable to attract businessmen and foreign investors. Pakistan should focus on its food and energy security on a priority basis. Also, Pakistan should focus on technology services which has immense potential to enhance exports and local productivity, Ghias Khan. The country needs to enhance the production of wheat and essential crops for meeting its local demand and boosting exports of agri-products. Further, he added the country is rich in mineral resources which can be translated into its lucrative exports. The investment should be encouraged in the productive sector instead of the real estate: We have to build skillset of the young population to make their role more productive in the economy.



RAWALPINDI: Street vendors are displaying sunglasses to attract customers at Faizabad neighbourhood. - APP

Experts advise to remain extra vigilant against monkeypox

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on Monday advised health authorities to stay vigilant against monkeypox and raise media awareness to prevent the outbreak of the virus in the country. Talking to a private news channel, Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri said that monkeypox is an infectious disease that is usually mild and is endemic in parts of west and central Africa. "The virus can be transmitted through contact with skin lesions or droplets from a contaminated person, as well as through shared items such as bedding or towels", he highlighted. He said the symptoms of monkeypox are similar to smallpox including fever, headache, muscle ache, fatigue, and skin bumps like chickenpox on the hands and face.

He advised all healthcare facilities and all healthcare providers in the provinces to report suspected monkeypox cases timely, adding, people should avoid shaking hands and should not share their towel and bed with anyone.

Another Khawaja Salman Rafiq said that Airport authorities should have to be extra vigilant while collecting 21-day travel history of passengers coming from other countries with monkeypox cases and check their current health status. He made it clear that the information circulating on social media about the monkeypox case in Pakistan is incorrect as health authorities of Pakistan was closely monitoring the situation and as per reports of the National Institute of Health, no case of monkeypox has yet been diagnosed in Pakistan so far. - APP

President administers oath to Senator Shahadat Awan as State Minister

Senator Shahadat Awan as State Minister on the advice of the PM

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday administered oath of office to Senator Shahadat Awan as Minister of State. The oath-taking ceremony was held at the Awan-e-Sadr. Earlier on May 26, President Alvi had given approval to the appointment of Senator Shahadat Awan as State Minister on the advice of the prime minister under article 92(1) of the Constitution. - APP

Fisherman becomes overnight millionaire in Gwadar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A fisherman became an overnight millionaire in Jiwani, Gwadar, after catching a croaker fish, which he sold for over Rs13.4 million at a local market. According to Gwadar Pro, the fisherman caught the fish on last Thursday, which weighed 48 kg. "Croaker is called Sowa in the language of local fishermen. They are no less than gold for fishermen," Sahib Gul who deals in fish at Karachi, told Gwadar Pro via phone.

Croaker is also called "Kir" in the Balochi language. Mr. Gul said that one time croakers were sold at a very low price and were mostly sent to Sri Lanka.

"However, the price of croakers skyrocketed as local businessmen gained access to markets in China, Japan and the rest of the world," according to Sahib Gul, adding, in China and Japan, croaker soup is the food of the elite class. According to Dr. Saifur Rehman, the special thing in croaker fish is the air-bladder in the chest which is used for medicinal purposes.

"Threads made from the bladder of fish are used to sew the internal organs of the human body; they are absorbable and you don't need to remove them once used in surgery," he said.

On May 15, 2022, local fishermen at Jiwani had caught 18 large sized croakers, which they sold for between Rs100,000 and Rs500,000 each. Last May, another fisherman from Jiwani had caught a 48 kg croaker fish which was sold at a Rs8.6 million. Croaker fish has high demand in the Chinese

markets. According to a news report, "a single swim bladder could fetch as much as Rs50,00,000 per kg in the Hong Kong or Guangzhou market". Having access to the market, where one can sell his products/stuff at the desired price, is nothing short of a blessing. As China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is transforming Gwadar into an international market, it will also offer local fishermen the opportunity to sell their fish at good prices, which will help economically empower local fishermen.

ZIEC to construct section of CPEC's central alignment in Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: A joint venture of China's Zhongding Int'l Engineering Co. and Pakistan's Progressive Technical Associate won contract to construct the 55-kilometre-long Awaran-Jhal Jhao road in South Balochistan after offering the lowest bid. According to Gwadar Pro, the National Highway Authority had floated the project with an estimated cost of Rs6.06 billion. However, the ZIEC-PTA joint venture offered to build the road for Rs5.15 billion. A contract has been signed with the JV for the purpose, NHA revealed on Friday. The project is part of the govern-

ment's plan to rehabilitate and widen the Hoshab-Bela road, which connects Gwadar and Karachi in the past but was later abandoned after the construction of Makran Coastal Highway in 2004. The road remained in dilapidated condition for nearly two decades until the government decided to remodel it as part of the central alignment of CPEC to link the Gwadar port with Karachi port and Sindh. The link, when completed, is expected to bring back economic activities in the least developed Awaran district of Balochistan. It will not only restore Awaran

its status of a connectivity pivot between Sindh and Balochistan, but will also help the locals transport their agricultural products to Karachi for better return. Awaran is a district of Kalat division, which shares boundary with Makran division. Gwadar is a district of Makran division. This important east-west link intersects the Gwadar-Turbat-Hoshab Motorway (M-8) of CPEC at Hoshab and Quetta-Karachi N-25 Highway at Bela. Works on 146 kilometres long Hoshab-Awaran and 80 kilometres long Jhal Jhao-Bela sections of the Hoshab-Bela link are already underway. - DNA

Baluchistan's biggest hydropower project resumed

The government worked out a comprehensive program for managing the incurring floods through small dams. The completion of these projects would help the irrigation system besides tackling the water scarcity situation in the province

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Construction of Baluchistan's biggest hydropower project, the Naulong Dam, has restarted, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. The dam will irrigate 47,000 acres of barren land and will provide 4.4MW of electricity. Issues related to the Naulong Dam have been sorted out and under the direction of the Standing Committee on Water Resources, the Federal Board of Revenue

(FBR) released Rs 1,916 million for the construction of the Naulong Dam to the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). The 186-feet high dam has a total storage capacity of 242,452 AFd. Live storage is 200,000 AF. While the annual benefits to agriculture will be Rs 2,017 billion, power Rs 0.413 billion, and fisheries Rs 0.018 billion. The Naulong Dam will create 23,500 agricultural jobs. It will help protect the catchment areas from the deluge. The dam will irrigate areas



near Jhal Magsi, Gandawa, and khuzdar, which will boost economic activities and strengthen farmer fra-

ternity in the province. The government expedited the construction of the Naulong dam. WAPDA already

completed its feasibility and detailed design. Since the water table in Baluchistan is quite low, fetching water for irrigation is a major challenge in itself. So, in order to cope with the water requirements in the province, the provincial and federal governments have sponsored the construction of many dams in Baluchistan, some of which are operational while others are yet to be completed. In addition to the aforementioned operational dams in Baluchistan, provincial

authorities in collaboration with the federal government have undertaken the '100 Dam Baluchistan' Initiative. The government worked out a comprehensive program for managing the incurring floods through small dams. The completion of these projects would help the irrigation system besides tackling the water scarcity situation in the province. It is one of the water conservation efforts by the government to solve the problem of water shortage in Baluchistan.

Politics of Imran Khan based on lies

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N senior leader Barrister Danyal-Chaudhry Monday said that Imran Khan did nothing for the welfare of the common man and only misled the public with his lies-based narratives.

Talking to a private news channel, he criticized that the politics of Imran Khan is based on lies and propaganda, adding, PTI government's poor performance has badly disappointed the masses and has hurt their political sentiments. Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) was responsible for damaging the economy, he said, adding, its wrong policies had caused price hike and increased unemployment in the country. "Imran Khan has given nothing except lies and propaganda", he said, adding, PTI government with his wrong policies had damaged all state institutions. - APP

DC directs to set up pushcarts, counters by June 1

RAWALPINDI: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) General Capt (Retd) Qasim Ijaz has directed all the Assistant Commissioners to establish 20 pushcart bazaars and 150 DC counters in the Rawalpindi by June 1, so that food item can be provided to the people at government rates.

Presiding over a meeting here at his office, the ADC informed that seven out of 20 pushcart bazaars had been set up while 83 DC counters have been established in mega-stores and cash and carry. He directed the officials that uniform design should be available in all pushcart bazaars and DC counters, adding official price lists should be displayed prominently.

Qasim added that space had been identified for the remaining pushcart and DC counters, and their establishment would be implemented soon. Giving details of the bazaars, he said that in Rawalpindi, pushcart bazaars had been set up in Haideri Chowk, Committee Chowk, Shabbaz Sharif Park, Jhanda Chichi and Chungi No. 22, while each pushcart Bazaar had also been established in Taxila and Kotli Satyan tehsils. - APP

IHC adjourns Shireen Mazari arrest case till June 16

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday adjourned hearing till June 16, regarding formation of a judicial commission to inquire the arrest of former federal minister and Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI's) Leader Shireen Mazari. Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the case filed by Imaan Mazari Advocate. Dr. Shireen Mazari also appeared before the court during this day hearing.

Additional Attorney General informed the court that most probably the commission would be set up this day as a summary had been moved in this regard. The further hearing of the case then adjourned till June 16. - APP

Commissioner for smoke-free generation

ISLAMABAD, May 30 (APP): Chief Commissioner Islamabad Aamer Ali Ahmed on Monday stressed the need for developing a curriculum to make next generations smoke-free.

"We want our generations smoke-free and every citizen should contribute to this noble cause to safeguard the health and well being of our present and future generations," said Chief Commissioner at a ceremony in connection with World No-Tobacco Day, which is observed worldwide on May 31 each year. He vowed to raise awareness and promote a smoke-free society by providing awareness against tobacco use and empower young people to engage in the fight against tobacco. Ahmed stated that the global tobacco epidemic kills nearly 8 million people globally every year. - APP

UK's Johnson needs to win back trust

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson cannot seem to shake off the partygate scandal. A delayed but troubling report that confirms what everyone knew for a while now is out. Troubling, because it took a long time coming. Damning?

No. Illegal parties were indeed held by the PM's team when the country went into three pandemic lockdowns in 2020. Johnson attended some of them and had earlier been fined by the police for breaking the law. He survived then by apologising to parliament. Luckily for him, the Russia-Ukraine war came as a face-saver, and his response to the offensive made him a hero of sorts, at least among the Conservative faithful. Some even painted him in Churchillian hues. The PM could be forgiven for his team's lockdown excesses though he was a participant under the circumstance. He first ignored the allegations; said sorry when the findings hit home, and believed all would be well again after brushing aside the moral dimension to the whole affair. But this week's report by senior bureaucrat Sue Gray is more serious and, while naming the PM, exposes the lack of supervision in the higher echelons of government. Gray says many of the events "should not have been allowed to happen." Partygate thus remains a moral dilemma for Johnson. A picture of the PM holding his drink as members of his cabinet and other officials watch has since gone viral. There was excessive drinking; parties went on until 4.20am on the day of Prince Philip's funeral; warnings were ignored. Revelation after revelation. And the PM's latest response? He takes responsibility and is humbled.

Boris Johnson isn't going anywhere. That's the general reading of the situation. He has apologised - again. "I have been as surprised and disappointed as anyone else in this House as the revelations have unfolded and, frankly, I have been appalled by some of the behaviour, particularly in the treatment of the security and the cleaning staff." Which begs the question: What action will he take against staff who flung the rules out the window and organised those parties? His fellow legislators and cabinet members are unwilling to ask for his head yet. Those touted as his likely successors, including Chancellor Rishi Sunak, have troubles of their own. It's better not to rock the boat at this juncture and back the prime minister till the next elections.

Time has been on Johnson's side and other events have since overtaken partygate. There's Covid fatigue, public memory is short and people want to get on with their lives. Partygate, however, has been a worrying episode for Johnson. He will survive but should do what it takes to win back the people's trust in his government.

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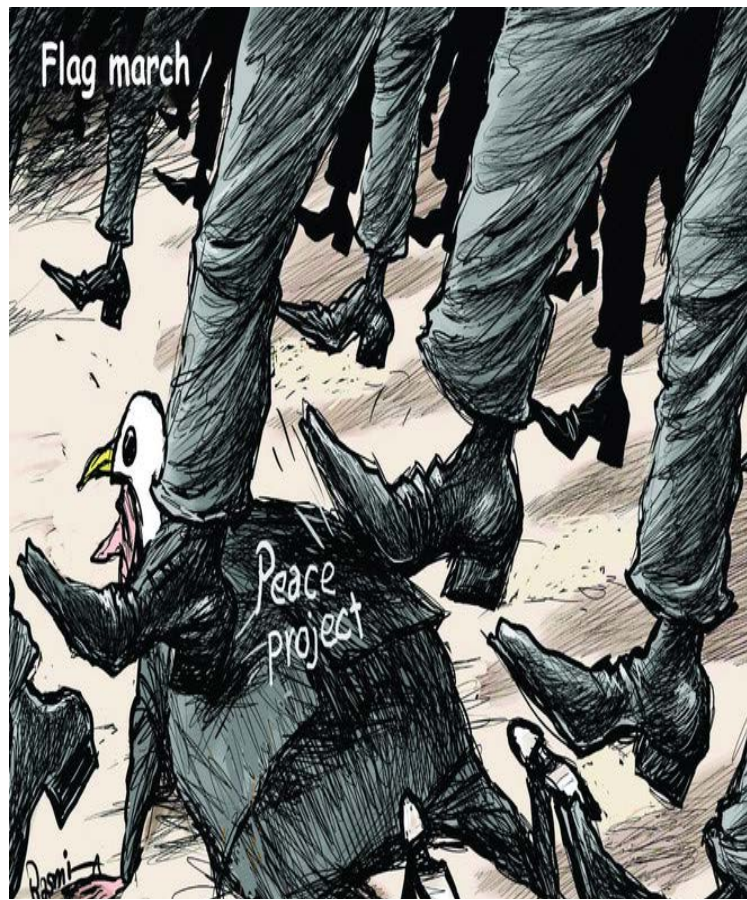
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New elections

Imran Khan's sudden change of strategy hasn't made the bigger picture any clearer, unfortunately, and now all sorts of rumours are flooding the capital. That PTI called off the sit-in and then the government went ahead with its electoral and NAB reforms hinted in their own ways that the poll might be nearer than most people think. Yet the ruling party has flatly ruled out any such thing and there are also signs that it only, very reluctantly raised petrol prices after ironclad assurances that it wouldn't be pushed into an election anytime soon. So now all eyes are on Imran Khan and what he does after his latest, six-day deadline expires. If he means business, like he says, but the government doesn't cave into his demands, like it keeps saying, then what can he possibly pull out of the hat that can force an election? Most observers believe, perhaps rightly so, that more uncertainty is the only thing that can be counted on with certainty.

If the recent past is any indication, there is likely to be a confrontation, resort to courts, and yet more toxification of the blame game. That's very bad news for the economy.

The government has finally done the right thing by raising petrol prices, considering the desperate need for the IMF program, but pretty high inflation down the road will force interest rates yet higher and keep a lid on productivity and growth. Sorting things out with the Fund will get more foreign debt, but political chaos at home will drive away all sorts of investments, which are much more crucial than more loans. All things considered, it would be far better for the people of Pakistan if their political leaders, for once, put their own agendas and interests on the side and agree not to hurt the economy any longer. What good would it be for either party, one clamouring for an election and the other rigidly opposing it, if it wrecks the economy to get what it wants? The road to elections must be made clear and the people must be allowed to vote in a government with a fresh mandate sooner rather than later.

Ukraine war: How long can the Middle East walk a tightrope?

James M. Dorsey

"Biden should use positive inducements to alter the crown prince's repressive behaviour. MBS, driven by self-interest, would accommodate US requests on human rights if accompanied with incentives and devoid of humiliation," said US-based high tech entrepreneur and cardiologist Khalid Aljabri. Two siblings of Mr. Aljabri, who was referring to Mr. Bin Salman by his initials, have been detained in the kingdom

For now, Ukraine is the far from my bed show for most Middle Eastern nations. The question is not if but when Ukraine will arrive on their doorstep.

Two centrifugal forces threaten to push Middle Eastern nations off the tightrope: an increasingly bifurcated world populated by a multitude of civilisationalist leaders in which "you are with us or against us," and increasingly a need for consistency in the US and Europe's application of international law and upholding of human and political rights standards. It wouldn't take much to throw straddlers off balance. The Biden administration is considering sending special forces to guard the newly populated US embassy in Kyiv. What happens if Russian forces strike the embassy much like US forces bombed the Chinese mission in Belgrade in 1999?

At the time, China did not respond militarily, but then China was not sup-

porting any party to the wars in former Yugoslavia in ways that the United States and its allies are assisting Ukraine.

Similarly, the risk of escalation exists if the United States, NATO, or individual European countries decide to train Ukrainian forces on Ukrainian soil and are attacked by Russia. To be sure, Russia, like NATO, does not want the war to expand into direct confrontation, but it would not take much for events

to spin out of control. By the same token, Gulf states' options may narrow if talks in Vienna fail to revive the 2015 international agreement that curbed Iran's nuclear programme.

US President Joe Biden and Iran have both unsuccessfully tried to use the talks to achieve goals beyond the original agreement, from which then-President Donald J. Trump withdrew in 2018.

"We do not have a deal ... and prospects for reaching one are, at best, tenuous," Robert Malley, Mr. Biden's special envoy for Iran, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee this week. Mr. Malley's statement came as a covert war between Israel and Iran appeared to escalate, and US officials were seeking to repair relations with Saudi Arabia, possibly paving the way for a visit to the Kingdom by Mr. Biden. Israel reportedly advised the Bid-

en administration that it was responsible for the recent killing in Tehran of a colonel in Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC). No one has officially claimed responsibility for the shooting.

Similarly, a drone strike targeted a highly sensitive military site outside Tehran, where Iran develops missile, nuclear, and drone technology. The drones exploded into a building used by the Iranian defence ministry to research drone development.

At the same time, a Saudi official noted that Saudi Arabia and Iran had not scheduled a sixth round of talks to resolve differences that have helped destabilise the Middle East because the exchanges had made "not enough" progress.

Relations between the United States and Saudi Arabia have been cool since Mr. Biden called Saudi Arabia a pariah state during his presidential election campaign. He has since effectively boycotted Mr. Bin Salman because of the crown prince's alleged involvement in the 2018 killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Mr. Bin Salman has denied any involvement but said he accepted responsibility for the killing as Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler.

As a result of the spat, Mr. Bin Salman has rejected US demands that the kingdom increase oil production to lower prices and inflationary pressures and help Europe reduce its dependency on Russian energy. In doing so, Saudi Arabia is playing with the US the same game that Turkey is engaged in within NATO. Both want to capitalise on US needs for support of Ukraine while not risking US, and in Turkey's case NATO security guarantees. Turkey has put conditions on Swedish and Finnish NATO membership but ultimately

wants the United States, NATO, and the European Union to develop a Black Sea strategy that would have Turkey at its core. Turkey is effectively left to its own devices without being embedded in a broader regional approach. A failure to revive the Iran nuclear agreement would likely drive home that countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have nowhere but the United States to go when seeking guarantees for their security. China is unwilling and unable to replace the US as a security guarantor, and Russia has taken itself out of the equation.

The US and European window of opportunity to include human and political rights in a meaningful way in its discussions may be while China maintains its current posture.

If this week's World Economic Forum in Davos was any indication, the United States and Europe are not about to avail themselves of the opportunity. Displaying confidence, Saudi Arabia, bolstered by surging oil prices, grabbed the limelight as the land of economic opportunity in a world battered by inflation, food shortages, and supply change problems.

"Biden should use positive inducements to alter the crown prince's repressive behaviour. MBS, driven by self-interest, would accommodate US requests on human rights if accompanied with incentives and devoid of humiliation," said US-based high tech entrepreneur and cardiologist Khalid Aljabri. Two siblings of Mr. Aljabri, who was referring to Mr. Bin Salman by his initials, have been detained in the kingdom. Following missile and drone attacks by Houthi rebels earlier this year, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have sought enhanced written bilateral defense agreements with the United States, if not a formal treaty.

Two of Mr. Biden's senior advisers visited Saudi Arabia this week to discuss oil, Iran, and security, including finalising the transfer of two strategic islands - Tiran and Sanafir - in the Red Sea from Egyptian to Saudi sovereignty with Israeli consent. US officials were scheduled in the following days in Washington to brief Israeli National Security Adviser Eyal Hulata on their discussions in the kingdom.

Intriguingly, Israeli media reported recent secret meetings between Israeli and Saudi officials that focused on security issues, including Iran. Like the Gulf states, Israel has effectively seen its hedging options narrow as a result of the Ukraine crisis but has been less out on the limb than the Gulf states.

However, in the final analysis, Middle Eastern states realise that the United States, in the words of former White House director for the Gulf, Kirsten Fontenrose, "can still easily build global coalitions when necessary. While Russia will be radioactive, more a predatory pariah than partner."

Ms. Fontenrose warned that "it would be foolish for nations that previously enjoyed beneficial relations with Russia to invite that radioactivity onto themselves now, in the emerging world order where Russia is not the bipolar power it hoped to become, but instead a failed bet."

That may be true for Russia and ultimately a no-brainer for Middle Eastern states once they have milked opportunities for what they are worth.

It could be altogether different if relations between the United States and China were to deteriorate to the degree they have between Washington and Moscow. That may even be more the case if the United States continues to be seen as selective and hypocritical in its adherence to human rights at home and abroad.

There is a sickness in America

Andrew Mitrovica

So, in the sad days ahead, America and the rest of us will watch and listen to the same pantomime we have watched and listened to before. The same scenes. The same grief. The same fury. The same vigils. The same funerals. The same questions. The same answers. The same politicians spouting the same mephitic excuses. Guns don't kill children; people do. A bad guy with a gun can only be stopped by a good guy with a gun. A merciful God is preparing, once more, to welcome his bullet-ridden children to a better, kinder place

Like the country he leads, Joe Biden looked and sounded exhausted. The United States president was obliged, yet again, to "address" the nation in the blunt-force-trauma-like aftermath of the murder of schoolchildren in a small

learn and play. Perhaps it was fatigue. It was, more likely, defeat. Biden's grim tone and forlorn posture conveyed a quiet resignation. Despite his immense power, Biden understands, I

Texas town - Uvalde - that few had heard of, but that now joins the gruesome roster of other towns that will always be synonymous with foul and sudden death. Newton. Parkland. Aurora. Charleston. Boulder. Roseburg. On and on and on.

Biden didn't "address" America. He mostly whispered to America, punctuated by bursts of familiar exasperation, outrage and futile calls to "do something" in response to this latest act of still incomprehensible terror. Nineteen kids and two teachers were slaughtered inside what should be a happy place filled with joy and the raw, unspoiled energy of a classroom where boys and girls

think, that there is a sickness in America that is beyond any rational remedy or cure. There is a sickness in America that is unique to America. No other country convulses with such premeditated violence so often against so many innocents at school, at work, at church and what seems like just a moment ago, at a grocery store in Buffalo. More innocents were picked to die in that place, at that time, by a calculating, hate-filled murderer because of the colour of their skin.

Yes, there is a sickness in America. A country has to be sick if it permits its children to be murdered at school, in playgrounds, at home, on its streets and does nothing about it. A country has to be sick if it shrugs and "moves on" after such killings. A country has to be sick if it prefers to watch silly games rather than acknowledge that it is sick. And, of course, a country has to be sick if it values its guns more than it values its children's lives.

Yes, there is a sickness in America. So, in the sad days ahead, America and the rest of us will watch and listen to the same pantomime we have watched and listened to before. The same scenes. The same grief. The same fury. The same vigils. The same funerals. The same questions. The same answers. The same politicians spouting the same mephitic excuses. Guns don't kill children; people do. A bad guy with a gun can only be stopped by a good guy with a gun. A merciful God is preparing, once more, to welcome his bullet-ridden children to a better, kinder place.

Yes, there is a sickness in America. Given that Texas is a "red" state, the poli-

ticians doing the talking on TV these days are largely white Republican men. They are the same white Republican men - a governor, senators and representatives - who lecture and scold a rainbow of women about the sanctity of life, of the unborn "child". They force women to comply. To submit. To bend to their "faith" and "beliefs" at the expense of a woman's right and freedom to choose and exercise agency over not only her body, but her future, too. They pass laws and decrees to deny women sovereignty over their wombs to protect, they say, "precious" life.

But once the child is born, their abiding and evangelical fidelity to that "precious" life evaporates as quickly as the morning mist. They abandon that life. They discard it since it is no longer politically expedient or profitable to pay rhetorical heed to that life. Worse, they sacrifice that life to the dreadful whims of troubled and sinister minds whom they allow to amass weapons of war with the ease of buying candy at a corner store.

They are content to see those "precious" lives annihilated in an instant for position, power and the bushels of money from other charlatans and zealots that help them keep their positions and power. They claim to defend the US Constitution. It is a lie. They are the enemies of "domestic tranquility" and the "general welfare". They are, instead, the agents of chaos, anguish and death.

They do not bear allegiance to the US Constitution. They bear allegiance to the NRA. They are hypocrites. They are complicit. They are the sickness.

The late comic George Carlin knew who and what they are. This is what he said about them in 1996:

"Pro-life conservatives are obsessed with the fetus from conception to 9 months. After that, they don't wanna know about you. They don't wanna hear from you. No nothing! No neonatal care, no daycare, no Head Start, no school lunch, no food stamps, no welfare, no nothing. If you're pre-born, you're fine, if you're preschool, you're f****d."

You also risk being shot in the face during first period or at recess, like the children at Sandy Hook Elementary School and Robb Elementary School.

When, inevitably, the caravan of attention leaves and the shock subsides, the mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers and the children left behind will have to go on, as best they can, with what remains of their lives. Alone.

Soon, the white Republican men will return to their lecturing and scolding about the "sanctity" of life. They will bide their time. Patience, they know, is a virtue and an advantage in politics. The urgency and imperative of the moment quickly fade in a nation with the attention span of a 24-hour news cycle.

In the meantime, the white Republican men will say what they always say about hearts, thoughts and prayers and they will do what they always do when children are massacred: Deny, deflect and blame anyone or anything but the guns and the profiteers who sell them.

Yes, there is a sickness in America. *Courtesy: Al Jazeera*

Briefs

PM seeks more Chinese investment

FROM PAGE 01
He thanked the Chinese leadership, and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, for their unstinting support towards Pakistan in the shape of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. He said that CPEC has helped Pakistan move forward a huge way. Recalling the start of the last decade, when electricity load-shedding was at its peak, PM Shehbaz Sharif said that the Chinese president and then prime minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif made various deals to set up power plants to overcome the issue by 2017. The premier pledged to fully facilitate the Chinese investors in Pakistan and never to forget China's cooperation.

PM to depart for 3-day...

FROM PAGE 01
Turkey to participate in the business engagements, the Foreign Office said in a statement issued here Monday. During the visit, the prime minister will have tete-a-tete with President Erdogan. This will be followed by delegation-level talks. Besides covering the entire gamut of Pakistan-Turkey bilateral relations, the two leaders will exchange views on regional and international issues. Both leaders will address a joint press stakeout after their meetings. President Erdogan will host a dinner in honour of the prime minister. This year, Pakistan and Turkey are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. During the visit, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the President of Turkey will jointly unveil a logo, marking the commencement of celebrations of this important milestone in the long history of exceptional bilateral ties.

The Turkish ministers of foreign affairs, trade, and health will call on the prime minister during the visit. The prime minister will have extensive interaction with leading Turkish businessmen and potential investors from diverse sectors. He will be hosted by President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB). The prime minister will also attend a Pakistan-Turkey Business Council Forum, hosted in collaboration with DEIK (Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board). During these events, the prime minister will highlight Pakistan's vast investment potential and encourage Turkish companies to invest in Pakistan and work to strengthen Pakistan-Turkey trade and economic ties. Prominent businessmen from Pakistan will participate in these events and will also hold Business to Business (B2B) meetings on the sidelines.

The relationship between Pakistan and Turkey is underpinned by structured institutional mechanisms. The High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) is the primary platform at the leadership-level, which has been instrumental in further cementing bilateral relations. So far, six sessions of the HLSCC have taken place. The 7th session is slated to take place this year.

The historic and long-standing relations between Pakistan and Turkey are firmly anchored in common faith, shared history, and a glorious tradition of mutual support to each other on issues of core interest. The Turkish leadership and government have steadfastly supported the just cause of Kashmir. Turkey is an important and active member of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir. The two countries have convergent views on a range of issues including peaceful and stable Afghanistan, Palestine, and countering Islamophobia. A large number of Turkish companies have invested more than USD 1 billion in different sectors (construction, power, solid waste management, hygiene products, electronics and dairy etc) in Pakistan. Prominent investors include Al Bayrak, Oz Pak, Zorlu, Arcelik, Siyahkalem, Sutas, Coca-Cola Icecek, and Hayat Kimiya. Heads of selected Turkish companies will also call on the prime minister during his stay in Ankara.



ISLAMABAD: Players of Nishtar hockey club posing for a picture on the occasion of semi final match with Islamabad Tigers hockey club. Nishtar defeated Islamabad Tigers by one goal and qualified for the final. – DNA

Over 120 illegal Jewish settlers defile Aqsa Mosque

The Israeli occupation forces launched on Sunday and during Monday overnight a large-scale detention campaign across the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem, detaining more than 60 Palestinian citizens

DNA

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Hordes of Jewish settlers desecrated the Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem under tight police protection on Monday morning and later in the afternoon. According to al-Qastal News website, at least 128 settlers entered the Mosque in different groups through its Maghariba Gate and toured its courtyards under police guard. During their tours at the Islamic holy site, the settlers received lectures from rabbis about the alleged temple mount and a number of them provocatively performed Talmudic prayers. Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation police imposed movement restrictions on Muslim worshippers at the Aqsa Mosque's entrances and gates. The Aqsa Mosque is exposed to daily desecration by Jewish settlers and police forces in the morning and the afternoon except on Fridays and Saturdays. The Israeli police close al-Maghariba Gate, which is used by Jews to enter the Mosque, at 10:30 am after the settlers complete their morning tours at the holy site. Later in the afternoon, the same gate is reopened for evening tours by settlers. During the presence of settlers inside the Mosque compound, entry restrictions are imposed

Qatar and Turkey slam Israel

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Qatar and Turkey have strongly denounced the Israeli government for allowing extremist Jewish settlers on Sunday to desecrate the Aqsa Mosque and perform Talmudic prayers in its courtyards under police protection. In a statement on Sunday, the Qatari ministry of foreign affairs warned that "Israel's persistence in allowing such provocative and serious violations against the Aqsa Mosque reveals its intent to divert the conflict into a religious war." The foreign ministry stressed the need for the international community to move urgently to curb such Israeli violations and assume its moral and legal responsibilities towards Jerusalem and its holy sites. The ministry described what the settlers did on Sunday in Occupied Jerusalem as a "flagrant violation of the international law and part of Israel's attempts to change the historical and legal status of the Aqsa Mosque and divide it temporally and spatially." It reiterated Qatar's unwavering position on the justice of the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, especially their right to establish their independent state on the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital. In a related context, the Turkish foreign ministry called on the Israeli government to respect the status quo at the Aqsa Mosque and spare the holy city any action that could lead to friction in the holy city. "The raids on the Aqsa Mosque by the Israeli member of parliament, Itamar Ben-Gvir, and by radical Jewish groups under the protection of the Israeli police, as well as the attempts of these groups to worship in this area are a clear violation of the status quo of al-Haram Al-Sharif and the Aqsa Mosque," the ministry stated in a press release on Sunday. "We call on the Israeli government to take the necessary measures to preserve the status quo of these holy places, and reiterate our call not to allow provocative actions that will escalate the tension in the region," the ministry added. – DNA

on Muslim worshippers at the entrances leading to the Mosque and their IDs could be seized until they leave the holy place. The Israeli occupation forces launched on

Sunday and during Monday overnight a large-scale detention campaign across the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem, detaining more than 60 Palestinian citizens.

The Israeli occupation forces concentrated in their campaign on occupied Jerusalem, where they detained more than 50 Palestinian citizens. The detention campaign targeted several areas in occupied Jerusalem, including the Al-Aqsa Mosque, the Old City, the Bab al-Amud area, Salah Edin Street, Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, in addition to the towns of At-Tur, JabelMukaber, Silwan, and Shufat. In addition, the Israeli occupation forces violently beat up, brutalized, and assaulted the detained people before transferring them to detention centers. Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation forces detained about 10 Palestinian youths during the confrontations that took place in different parts of the occupied West Bank towns and cities.

Three youths were detained by the Israeli occupation forces near the Al-Jalama checkpoint in northern Jenin, two others detained near the Huwara checkpoint in southern Nablus, while four other youths were detained during confrontations in Hebron and Tubas. It's noteworthy to mention that over 70,000 extremist Israeli settlers launched on Sunday the provocative flag march, heading to the Bab al-Amud area and passing through the Old City, triggering wide confrontations and protests across occupied Jerusalem and West Bank.

Daren Sammy receives his 'Sitara-e-Pakistan' award



SAINT LUCIA: Peshawar Zalmi former captain and current head coach Daren Sammy Monday received the civil award 'Sitara-e-Pakistan' for his invaluable contribution to reviving international cricket in Pakistan. Taking to his official Twitter handle, the star player shared pictures of him receiving the highest civilian award. "There it is...me collecting the Sitara-e-Pakistan award. Such a proud

moment," he wrote. Expressing his love for Pakistan, Sammy said: "Pakistan is like home to me and this is an honour for me. I am very proud." He also shared a picture gallery on his official Instagram handle where he mentioned that cricket took him all over the world enabling him to see and play in some amazing places. "Pakistan is definitely one of these places. A place that always makes me feel at

home. It's such an honour to have received this prestigious award (Sitara-e-Pakistan) from the government and people of Pakistan. Thank you. #PakistanZindabad," he wrote. Congratulating the West Indies player, Pakistan Super League franchise Peshawar Zalmi owner Javed Afridi wrote on Twitter: "Congratulations brother @darensammy88! Well-deserved Sitara-e-Pakistan!" – DNA

Marcelo confirms Madrid exit

LONDON: Marcelo Vieira confirmed his Real Madrid exit after the UEFA Champions League final on Saturday, in which the Spanish club beat Liverpool 1-0 to become kings of Europe for a record 14th time. "It's not a day of sadness, I'm leaving with a lot of joy, grateful to the fans and the magical nights I've experienced at the Bernabeu," the 34-year-old said during the trophy ceremony. Earlier, it was being said that the Spanish club were unwilling to renew his contract, despite his desire to stay. Marcelo joined Real Madrid from Brazilian club Fluminense in 2007 to fill the shoes of Roberto Carlos, who left for Turkiye's Fenerbahce. Marcelo is the most decorated player in Los Merengues history as he helped them win 25 titles – including five UEFA Champions League trophies – during his 16 seasons at the club. He scored 38 goals and made 103 assists in 545 games for the Madrid team. – DNA

France holds meeting to prevent repeat of UCL chaos

PARIS: France's sports ministry will host a meeting of security and football officials Monday following the chaos that marred the Champions League final between Liverpool and Real Madrid, as Paris prepares to host the 2024 Olympics. Sports Minister Amelie Oudea-Castera said they want to identify what went wrong to avoid a repeat of Saturday's scenes outside Paris' Stade de France. The Liverpool club said it has called for an investigation into the treatment of its supporters ahead of the game, when thousands of ticket holders struggled to enter the stadium. Police used tear gas and pepper spray on fans outside, while others managed to scale fences to access the stadium. The scenes tarnished the image of the French capital, raising questions about its ability to host sporting events as it gears up for the 2024 sporting showpiece, as well as the 2023 Rugby World Cup. Oudea-Castera expressed regret that "some supporters who had tickets were not able to access the match". Monday's meeting at the sports ministry, due to start at 0900 GMT, will involve European football governing body UEFA, French football chiefs and the French police. "The priority now is to identify very precisely what went wrong... in order to learn all the lessons so that such incidents do not happen again at our future major international sporting events," said Oudea-Castera. Her admission of possible shortcomings by the French authorities marked a more conciliatory stance, after officials initially lashed out at the Liverpool fans for the chaos. French Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said Saturday "thousands of British 'supporters' either without tickets or with fake ones forced their way through and sometimes behaved violently towards the stewards". – DNA

Imran seeks SC's protection for march

FROM PAGE 01

"I did not want to spread anarchy and division in the country," he said. "Do we have right to peaceful protest? Under what law did they [government] stop us," said the PTI chief, asking the apex court to announce ruling to give them unhindered access to Islamabad for staging a 'peaceful protest'. Imran Khan maintained that all governments in the past were toppled on the charges of the corruption except his regime, which he said was toppled as a result of a "foreign conspiracy". "For the first time in the country people took to the streets instead of distributing sweets when my government was overthrown," he said.

Reiterating his allegations that the US engineered his ouster from power in connivance with the incumbent rulers, he said, "I do not want war with anyone, we do not want bad relations with anyone, but we will not accept anyone's slavery". Imran said PML-N and its allies were "scared" of holding early elections because they will hear slogans of "thieves and traitors when they go in public".

US won't send Ukraine long-range weapons

FROM PAGE 01

Multiple outlets had reported that the administration was leaning toward sending advanced long-range rocket systems to Ukraine, which is currently fending off an invasion from Moscow – and to which the U.S. is providing significant economic and military support. Biden was asked about the potential move by reporters outside the White House and said that his administration would not send Ukraine rocket systems that strike into Russia. The Washington Post reported that the administration was mulling providing the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), which would allow Ukrainians to fire rockets much further than they are currently able. MLRS had reportedly been a top request from Ukrainian officials, who say they need it to stop the advance of Russian forces in the east, which has taken control of the key city of Lyman last week.

No change in stance on Palestine

FROM PAGE 01

she said adding Pakistan fully supported the Palestinian right to a referendum in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions. The minister said the world saw a two-state solution as a guarantee of lasting peace in the region. She said that the promise of a Palestinian state with pre-1967 borders, Jerusalem as its capital and geographical unity must be fulfilled. Occupied Palestine and Jammu and Kashmir were the longest running issues on the UN Security Council agenda and their solution was the responsibility of the international community. Till a just solution to these two problems, lasting peace in the world will remain a dream, she maintained. "We will continue to do our utmost to support the just struggle of the people of Occupied Palestine and the Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir", she said. Every negative step taken for cheap political publicity should be discouraged in the national interest.

Pakistan condemns killing...

FROM PAGE 01

He said the martyrdom of nine Kashmiris in just the last four days, including two in Anantnag, three in Baramulla district, and four in Pulwama districts of IIOJK, is highly condemnable and part of the unabated brutal campaign of oppression against the Kashmiris. He said more than 609 innocent Kashmiris have so far been martyred by the Indian occupation forces in staged encounters, since India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019.

Liverpool return to heroes' welcome

The result in Paris was overshadowed by chaotic scenes which delayed the kick-off at the Stade de France by over half an hour, with thousands of ticket holders struggling to enter the stadium as French police used tear gas on Liverpool fans

DNA

LIVERPOOL: Thousands of fans lined the streets of the city as double cup-winners Liverpool returned home for an open-top bus parade on Sunday that took place amid a flood of conflicting emotions. Winning both the League Cup and FA Cup in the one season, as Liverpool did by twice beating Chelsea on penalties in two Wembley finals, would be reason enough to celebrate for most clubs. But the two trophies they really wanted, and which would have enabled them to claim an unprecedented quadruple in a single campaign, narrowly eluded Liverpool. Manchester City pipped them to the Premier League by just a single point last week before Liverpool lost 1-0 to Spanish giants Real Madrid in Europe's showpiece Champions League final in Paris on Saturday. Supporters of rival teams were quick to point out Liverpool had failed to score a goal in regulation time in any of the three

finals they had played this season. But as the bus carrying players and officials displaying the two trophies won by the Reds this term made its way through the city amid loud cheers and a vibrant backdrop of flares and flags, defiant Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said: "This is the best club in the world.

"We lost a Champions League final yesterday and this is the reception we received. I really couldn't care less what other people think. What a club," the German added. The result in Paris was overshadowed by chaotic scenes which delayed the kick-off at the Stade de France by over half an hour, with



thousands of ticket holders struggling to enter the stadium as French police used tear gas on Liverpool fans. As Reds supporter Richard Dickinson watched the parade go by, he told AFP: "There are several high-profile media people who have actually come out and talked about how badly fans were treated over there (Paris) and suggested it wasn't the fault of Liverpool fans, which you know I can't believe for a minute it would be. It's a shame that it actually ruined the sport spectacle for so many, and what I've read it's quite disturbing." Turning to Liverpool's season on the field, he added: "I think the team has had a great year you know, unfortunate not to win all four trophies but we picked up two which is fantastic... Last night was unlucky, but you can't fault the effort the boys put in!" Fellow Liverpool fan Ashany Rehal expressed her pride in the team as she pleaded for Senegal's Sadio Mane, linked with a move to German giants Bayern Munich, and Egypt's Mohamed Salah to stay amid reports the two stars could be on their way out of Anfield.

Briefs

Iran blame 'Zionists' for assassinating senior colonel

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Monday accused "Zionists" of shooting dead Col. Hassan Sayad Khodai in the capital Tehran earlier this month, days after Israel reportedly told the United States it was behind the killing. Khodai, 50, was fatally shot on May 22 outside his home in the east of the Iranian capital by assailants on motorcycles. He was hit with five bullets, according to official media. It was the most high-profile killing inside Iran since the November 2020 murder of top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh - an act Tehran blamed on archenemy Israel. Khodai was killed "by the most vicious people, the Zionists, and God willing, we will avenge his death," head of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Maj. Gen. Hossein Salami said during a visit to his family, according to the guards' Sepah News website. The general did not, however, use the term "Zionist regime," routinely used by the Islamic republic as a direct reference to Israel. "The enemy pursued him (the colonel) from the heart of the White House and Tel Aviv for months and years, door to door and alley to alley to martyr him," Salami added. The New York Times reported last week that Israel has told the U.S. that Tel Aviv was behind the killing of Khodai. The U.S. daily cited an anonymous "intelligence official briefed on the communications."

Syrian Opp. ready to support Turkey's anti-terror op

DNA

ANKARA: The Syrian moderate opposition said they were ready to join the Turkish military in a potential new cross-border counter-terrorism operation against the PKK's Syrian offshoot YPG in the north to liberate largely Arab populated towns and villages from the terrorists. Two senior commanders said orders were given to heads of units of the Turkey-backed Syrian National Army (SNA) to take an offensive stance as the Turkish military steps up mortar shelling and drone strikes in territory the YPG/PKK control. "Readiness can happen in a day or two. There are thousands of fighters ready to participate alongside the Turkish military," Capt. Abdul Salam Abdul Razak, a prominent Syrian opposition commander told Reuters. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said last week Ankara would soon launch new military operations along its southern borders to create safe zones 30 kilometers (20 miles) deep to combat terrorist threats from these regions. Ankara has conducted three successful counter-terrorism operations into northern Syria since 2016, clearing hundreds of kilometers of land and pushing some 30 kilometers deep into the country, in operations targeting mainly the U.S.-backed YPG/PKK and Daesh terrorists.

Germany's inflation hits new record

DNA

BERLIN: Germany's annual inflation rate climbed to a new record of 7.9% in May, up from 7.4% in April, according to provisional data published on Monday. The country's inflation rate has now hit all-time highs for three consecutive months - a first since German reunification in 1990. Energy prices continue to play a dominant role in the spiraling crisis, rising 38.3% on annual basis in May, German statistical agency Destatis reported. Food prices also "increased above average" with a jump of 11.1%. "An inflation rate similar to that of May 2022 was last recorded in Germany in winter 1973/1974 when mineral oil prices had sharply increased, too, as a consequence of the first oil crisis," read a Destatis statement.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman met with World Bank Country Director Najy Benhassine in Islamabad. - DNA

CPEC drastically cuts travel time in Pakistan: Report

Riasat Ali is a retired serviceman living in Rawalpindi, the twin city of the capital Islamabad. His son Shehzad recently got a lucrative job in a multinational beverages company in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway (M-14) of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had reduced travel time between Islamabad and Quetta from 16 to 18 hours to 10-12 hours, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Monday. Before the M-14 Motorway, it took up to 10 hours till Dera Ismail Khan through Talagang-Mianwali Road, the hardest and the most uncomfortable portion of the route. Now it takes only 2-3 hours to reach Dera on M-14, he said. The travel time will further go down once other CPEC road projects between Quetta and Dera Ismail Khan are completed, he said.

According to the report, Mehmood, a resident of Lakki Marwat, who owns a grocery shop in Rawalpindi, said that M-14 had cut the travel time between his hometown and Rawalpindi by almost 75%. "It once took us 8 hours to reach Lakki, a district of KP province adjacent to Dera Ismail Khan, with a lot of hassle and discomfort. However, the M-14 Motorway has reduced the travel time to only two hours. People from our area can even come to Islamabad for lunch or dinner in a high-end restaurant and go back home the same day," he revealed. It was beyond imagination before, he said. Riasat Ali is a retired serviceman living in Rawalpindi, the twin city of the capital Islamabad. His son

Shehzad recently got a lucrative job in a multinational beverages company in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan province. For Riasat, it was no doubt a big moment of joy, but he was equally worried about the hardships his son will go through for 16-18 long hours while traveling between Rawalpindi and Quetta. Having served in Balochistan several times during his service, Riasat knew well about the road conditions and difficulties faced by commuters on this route. Traveling by train was also out of option, as it also took 32-36 hours to reach Quetta from Rawalpindi. A day before leaving for Quetta, Shehzad booked a seat on a bus service in Islamabad-Pakistan Economic Cor-

ridor (CPEC) had reduced travel time between Islamabad and Quetta from 16 to 18 hours to 10-12 hours. "M-14 has not only cut the travel time and ensured a comfortable commute, but also saved a lot for us in the costs of fuel and maintenance of vehicles," Amir, a front desk officer at AK Movers, a transport service in G-9 Markaz of Islamabad, said. "We slashed our fares for Quetta by Rs 200 after the inauguration of the M-14 Motorway earlier this year," he added. Before the M-14 Motorway, it took up to 10 hours till Dera Ismail Khan through Talagang-Mianwali Road, the hardest and the most uncomfortable portion of the route. Now it takes only 2-3 hours to reach Dera on

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Turkiye, UAE ministers discuss cooperation on defense industry

DNA

ABU DHABI: Turkey's Defense Minister Hulusi Akar headed to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) late Sunday on the first official visit at the defense minister level in 15 years, as the two countries mark a new era in bilateral relations. During his visit, Akar discussed military training cooperation and issues in the defense industry in a meeting with his Emirati counterpart Mohammed

Ahmed Al Bowardi on Monday. It was stated that during a "sincere and positive" meeting, views were exchanged on bilateral and regional issues as well as military training cooperation and the defense industry. Turkey's Ambassador to Abu Dhabi, Tugay Tunçer, was also present at the meeting, in which the UAE's Chief of Staff was also present. Akar visited the Wahat Al Karama war memorial after the meeting and signed the special guest book. In February, Turkey and the

UAE signed 13 new agreements in various fields during President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's visit to the Gulf country. The two countries have seen their ties affected by regional tensions, including the conflict in Libya, where the UAE and Turkey have backed opposing sides in recent years. Turkey in 2020 accused the UAE of bringing chaos to the Middle East through its interventions in Libya and Yemen, while the UAE and several other countries criticized Turkey's military actions.

New round of Syrian peace talks begins in Geneva

DNA

GENEVA: A new round of meetings involving the Syrian Constitutional Committee seeking a solution to the ongoing war in Syria started in Geneva on Monday. Members of the "Small Group" responsible for writing the constitution, consisting of 15 representatives from the Bashar Assad regime, non-governmental organizations, and the Syrian opposition, met for the eighth round of talks at a Geneva hotel under UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen. The last round of talks for a solution to the war in Syria ended in Geneva on March 25, with none of the parties offering any signs that they would proceed to another level of negotiations. On Friday, Jennifer Fenton, the special envoy's spokesperson, told journalists that Pedersen was in Damascus last week. He met the regime's foreign minister, other officials, and their chief representative of the constitutional committee. - DNA

India heading towards another power crisis in July-August: Report

The CREA said the problem of power shortage is not coal production but distribution and official apathy

BEIJING: Lower pre-monsoon coal stock at thermal power plants in India could lead to another power crisis in July-August, Chinese media reported while quoting a report issued by independent research organization. "Going by coal stocks in thermal power stations, India's current power crisis is unlikely to be resolved soon. The onset of the southwest monsoon will further hamper mining and transportation of coal from mines to power stations," the Center for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA), said the report. "At the start of May 2022, non-pithead power stations have only six days of coal left, against the stipulated 20-26 days. On the other hand, pithead power stations have coal stock enough for 13 days," said the report. According to the CREA, a lower pre-monsoon coal stock at power stations indicates the possibility of another power crisis in July-August 2022. China.org.cn reported. "Plant operators and regulators had three months to prepare and avoid a crunch," Sunil Dahiya, an analyst with the CREA, said. "Yet, no preemptive action was taken to resolve this crisis." The CREA said the problem of power shortage is not coal production but distribution and official apathy. India produced 777.26 million tons of coal in the financial year 2022, an 8.5 percent increase from the previous year. "India's coal production this year was the highest in its history and ironically, millions of people are left vulnerable to power cuts amid severe heatwaves and other vagaries of Indian weather," Dahiya said. The authorities have canceled hundreds of passenger trains to allow faster movement of coal carriages to tackle critically low stocks at power plants. - APP

First "electric cable company" in Gwadar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Gwadar Free Zone (Phase II) is likely to see the first entry of the "electric cable manufacturing company of Pakistan" in the wake of warm interactions between stakeholders ushering in an era of a flurry of business activities in Gwadar, a regional business hub of Pakistan. According to Gwadar Pro, out of many companies, registered, operational, or in process of being established in Gwadar Free Zone Phase I and Gwadar Free Zone Phase II, Pakistan's electric cable maker "Coppergate" will be the first enterprise to run its manufacturing unit if all business prospects radiate promising vibes. It will not only be engaged in the export business but

also contribute to the local market. Coppergate is a Lahore-based electric cable producing multinational corporation which operates in Pakistan's 14 cities and South Africa and UAE. Prospects of maturing the deal are high after chairman China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC) Zhang Baozhong met with Coppergate Pakistan's Business advisor, Widad Durrani, and Zonal Manager Mansoor Ali recently in Gwadar. They expressed the company's plan to set up a manufacturing base in Gwadar. With the accelerated pace of industrialization of Gwadar Free Zone Phase II, the demand for electric hardware and relevant materials has been continually rising. They believed that the establishment of the production unit in Gwadar, in

addition to fulfilling local demand, can act as a catalyst for the stream of industrialization of Gwadar. Recently, commercial activities in Gwadar Free Zone have gained momentum chiefly due to Zhang Baozhong's endeavors. COPHC has invested more than \$300 million in the development of Gwadar port and plans to invest \$3 bil-

lion in the upcoming years, Chairman stated. Moreover, over RMB 5 billion has been disbursed by the Chinese government for the social sector in Gwadar so far. A Chinese enterprise is planning to set up a \$5 million oil refinery in the Free Zone. It is learned that if Coppergate starts business in Gwadar Free Zone (Phase II),

it requires raw materials in abundance. Fortunately, HK Sun, a metal processing industry in Gwadar Free Zone has the capacity to supply the required raw materials. Industrial cooperation between the two will be mutually beneficial. Dreams of industrialization in Gwadar are already being materialized. The construction of Gwadar Fort Free Zone Phase-I spreading over 60 acres has been completed with all infrastructures, including power, water, and roads, now in operation. Around 47 enterprises are registered. More than eight factories are fully operational, while many others are under construction. Meanwhile "Gwadar Free Zone (Phase II)" goes into formal action after the initiation of the lands' allocation process and soil testing rolled

out by registered companies. Agvon, a Chinese company, has formally set in motion. As per the agreement, Agvon plans to build a state-of-the-art fertilizer processing plant within the stipulated time. Another company, Hang Geng, has been allocated 10 acres of land. It will launch infrastructure work after finishing the mandatory licensing process as per set rules and regulations. The company intends to run a pharmaceutical factory that will produce medicine from animal skins. More companies, including Essatet industries, Bari Textile and Idrees Steel, have also entered into agreements. Each of them has also been allocated one acre of land and following the completion of prescribed modalities, procedures will be seen in action soon.

Dutton elected new leader of Liberal Party

DNA

SYDNEY: Australia's opposition Liberal Party has elected former Defense Minister Peter Dutton as the new leader of the party on Monday, according to local media. Dutton was chosen along with Sussan Ley as his deputy unopposed by the party, Sky News reported. Scott Morrison, the former prime minister and the party's leader, stepped down after his party was defeated in the May 21 federal election against Labor Party and Anthony Albanese became the new premier of the country. "Our ... is the best party to keep our country safe and our economy strong so we can afford to pay for our essential services," the broadcaster quoted Dutton as saying during his first press conference in Canberra. "By the time of the next election in 2025 we will have presented a plan to the Australian people which will clean up Labor's inevitable mess and lay out our own vision," he added. Dutton, 51, served as health and sports minister, home affairs minister and defense minister in different terms of the Liberal Party's governments.

Nepal recovers 21 bodies at site of plane crash

DNA

NEW DELHI: Rescuers have recovered 21 dead bodies at a site where the wreckage of a small passenger plane, carrying 22 people from Nepal's tourist city of Pokhara, was found on Monday morning, according to the country's civil aviation authorities. Deo Chandra Lal, spokesman for Nepal's Civil Aviation Authority, told Anadolu Agency that one person is still missing and the search operation is still underway in the area. A spokesman for the army on Monday morning announced that search and rescue troops physically located the plane crash site, while the cause of the crash has yet to be announced. The private plane, operated by Nepal's Tara Air, had gone missing soon after taking off Sunday from the tourist city of Pokhara. There were 19 passengers and three crew members on board the 9N-AET Twin Otter aircraft, which was traveling to the Jomson area in western Nepal. Search and rescue operation resumed Monday morning after they were halted Sunday evening due to adverse weather and loss of daylight, officials had said. The Indian Embassy in Nepal said Sunday that four Indian nationals were among those on board the plane.

North Korea lifts Covid-19 lockdown

DNA

PYONGYANG: North Korea has lifted movement restrictions imposed in the capital Pyongyang after its first admission of a COVID-19 outbreak weeks ago, media reported Monday, as the isolated country reports that the virus situation is now under control. The North has been in a heated battle against an unprecedented COVID-19 wave since declaring a state of emergency and imposing a nationwide lockdown this month, fueling concerns about a lack of vaccines, medical supplies and food shortages. As of Sunday, the restrictions had been lifted, Japan's Kyodo news agency said, citing an unnamed source in Beijing. A spokesperson for South Korea's Unification Ministry handling inter-Korean affairs said it could not confirm the report, as the North's state media had not announced the decision. The Kyodo report came shortly after North Korean leader Kim Jong Un presided over a Politburo meeting to discuss revising anti-epidemic restrictions, assessing the situation over the country's first COVID-19 outbreak was "improving." "The Political Bureau examined the issue of effectively and quickly coordinating and enforcing the anti-epidemic regulations and guidelines given the current stable anti-epidemic situation," the North's state media KCNA said on Sunday.

Briefs

WB to disburse 700 million to Sri Lanka

WEB DESK

COLOMBO: The World Bank will disburse approximately 700 million U.S. dollars to Sri Lanka within the next few months, Sri Lanka's foreign minister announced on Monday. This pledge was made when the World Bank's Country Manager in Colombo Chiyo Kanda talked to Sri Lankan Minister of Foreign Affairs G.L. Peiris. During the meeting, the minister sought assistance from the World Bank until long term assistance materializes through the International Monetary Fund, other international institutions and donor countries. The minister stated that short term financial assistance from the World Bank would be appreciated until sustainable solutions are found. The World Bank country manager said that her office is also working with other organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, and the UN office, encouraging them to "re-purpose" their already committed projects to help the people of Sri Lanka at this difficult time. Sri Lanka is facing a severe foreign currency shortage which has created problems in importing essential items.

EU leaders plead with Orban to back Russian oil ban

AGENCIES

BRUSSELS: EU leaders on Monday will try to persuade Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to back a watered-down oil embargo against Russia after a month of haggling over the bloc's latest sanctions. The sixth wave of measures against Moscow was put on the table weeks ago, but has been refused by Orban who argues that an oil embargo would be an "atomic bomb" against his country's economy. French President Emmanuel Macron cautiously told reporters that a long-sought-after deal was "getting closer", but others doubted that the Hungarian leader was ready to sign on at this stage. "I don't think we'll reach an agreement today," said Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas at a political meeting ahead of the summit in Brussels. "Of course we're going to have discussions, but everybody needs to be on board," she said, adding that she did not expect a solution before a summit in late June. EU sanctions require the backing of all 27 member states and ambassadors fell short of finalising a deal just hours before the start of the summit.

Jordan, UAE, Egypt launch partnership for 10-bln-USD projects

FOREIGN DESK

AMMAN: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Egypt on Sunday launched the Industrial Partnership for Sustainable Economic Development to implement industrial projects worth 10 billion U.S. dollars. Jordan's state-run Petra news agency reported that under the partnership announced during a meeting between the three sides in Abu Dhabi, a fund will be created and managed by ADQ, a UAE holding company, to accelerate work across priority sectors. The partnership, which seeks to boost industrial cooperation between the three countries, aims at implementing joint investments and projects to foster mutual and strategic interests. The investments will be implemented in the fields of pharmaceuticals, agriculture, food manufacturing, petrochemicals, metals, minerals, and others, said the news agency.

Far-right Israeli attacks show 'Jerusalem Day' reality

Ultra-nationalist Israelis violently confronted Palestinians both during and after the 'flag march'

NEWS DESK

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: "Jerusalem Day" and its accompanying 'flag march' came and went in occupied East Jerusalem's Old City, but, despite Israeli authorities breathing a sigh of relief that it did not trigger wider confrontations between Israel and the Palestinians, particularly Hamas in Gaza, the reality was a day of violence in which ultra-nationalist Jewish Israelis attacked countless Palestinians, many times under the eyes of Israeli police. At least 81 Palestinians were wounded on Sunday by Israeli forces and far-right Jews in Jerusalem during and after the flag march, which marked the day Israel illegally occupied and annexed the city's eastern half in 1967. Most Jewish Israelis view it as

the day Jerusalem was "unified". The Palestinian Red Crescent told Al Jazeera that injuries during the day-long rally had been caused by rubber-coated bullets, beatings, pepper spray, and one case of live ammunition. At least 28 Palestinians were transferred to hospital for treatment. Israeli police said that five of its officers were lightly injured. At least 70,000 Israelis participated in the annual march, which has been described as a "racist" and "fascist" rally in and around the Old City of Jerusalem, and specifically passed through the Muslim Quarter, where shops were largely shuttered in preparation. The march included the waving of Israeli flags and the singing of nationalistic songs, as well as the chanting of slogans such as "death to Arabs" and "may your

villages burn down," including in the Old City's Muslim Quarter. During the march, far-right Jews witnessed assaulting Palestinian residents, as well as medics, and local and international journalists. In one incident filmed and shared widely on social media, a Jewish man attacked and pepper-sprayed an elderly Palestinian woman in the face, causing outrage. As she was carried out for treatment through the Old City's Damascus Gate, another demonstrator used pepper spray against a young Palestinian, and then another pulled out a pistol and aimed it at journalists at the scene. While the march was set to end at approximately 9pm local time (18:00 GMT), attacks persisted late into the evening. Following the rally, large groups of ultra-nationalist Israelis rampaged through Palestinian neigh-

bourhoods in East Jerusalem, and assaulted residents and their property. Jerusalem-based political analyst Nasser al-Hidmi described "the lawlessness and provocations of the settlers" on Sunday as a "very dangerous precedent". "The scenes we witnessed yesterday were catastrophic for Palestinian Jerusalemites and the Palestinian people as a whole," al-Hidmi told Al Jazeera. "It was very clear that the occupation's government gave the reins to its settlers in order to carry out their assaults," which he said "only come out of hatred and racism, which are rampant in Zionist society". Videos shared by residents, activists and journalists showed dozens of settlers smashing and vandalising Palestinian cars, throwing rocks at homes and assaulting residents, including with pepper spray.

Xi Jinping welcomes Hong Kong's next leader John Lee

AGENCIES

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping has met with Hong Kong's next leader in Beijing, telling John Lee he has the full trust of the central government, state media said Monday. Lee travelled to the capital on Saturday to receive Beijing's blessing as he prepares to take office in a month. The 64-year-old former security chief was chosen as the next chief executive by a committee of Beijing loyalists in early May. "I believe that the administration of the new government will definitely bring forth a new atmosphere, and compose a new chapter in Hong Kong's development," Xi said, according to official news agency Xinhua. Lee will assume office on July 1, which is the 25th anniversary of Hong Kong's transfer from British to Chinese rule and the halfway point of its "One Country, Two Systems" political model. According to Xinhua, Xi said Lee has the "courage to take responsibility" and "had made contributions to safeguarding national security and Hong Kong's prosperity and stability". "The central government fully affirms and fully trusts you," Xi added. According to a statement from the Hong Kong government, Lee said in the meeting that he was "deeply honoured by the appointment and fully aware of the great responsibility upon me". He promised to "unite all sectors" and bring the government and people together to "strive for the well-being of Hong Kong and its people". "Together, we will build Hong Kong into a city with long-term prosperity and a caring and inclusive society," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defense Khawaja Asif presenting a souvenir to Ambassador of Egypt Tarek Mohamed Dahrough. - DNA

EU envoy indicates GSP+ status extension to Pakistan

KARACHI: Chargé d'Affaires of the European Union (EU) Delegation to Pakistan Thomas Seiler has indicated that "GSP+ beyond 2023 is possible for Pakistan" as the country's government has ensured the EU that all efforts to show compliance with the high requirements would be made. He was speaking at a conference on "Human Rights Reforms in Sindh - GSP+ and Beyond" organized by the Human Rights Department, Government of Sindh at a local hotel on Monday, according to a news release. The Sindh Minister for Labour and Human Resource Saeed Ghani was the chief guest while Special Assistant to Sindh Chief Minister Surendar Valasai inaugurated the conference, which was attended by human rights activists, government officers of various depart-

ments, public representatives, civil society and labour rights activists and minorities' representatives. Thomas Seiler said in the next phase of the Generalised System of Preference (GSP-Plus) there would be more international conventions and covenants. These instruments would pertain to the recognition of the competence of the UN Human Rights Council to consider complaints from individuals, abolish the death penalty and the requirement to recognize the International Criminal Court - ICC (for genocide, crime against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression). "The final regulation can be expected before the end of the year," he remarked. He reminded the main duty

of employers toward human rights, labour rights and the combat against climate change. "They will have to respect and implement human rights in their enterprises, and to play an active role in building a sustainable economy and society." Speaking on the occasion, chief guest Saeed Ghani said the government of Sindh is leading all the provinces in making legislation for protection of rights of labour, women, minorities and people with disabilities. "We consider the protection of people's rights as our duty rather an obligation to an international commitment," Saeed Ghani said adding that the Sindh government has made all the laws on its own as the ruling Pakistan People Party is committed for this cause, he remarked. - APP

China to work with regional countries for Afghan peace



NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China is ready to work with regional countries as always to strengthen communication and coordination, build consensus and forge synergy to help Afghanistan achieve lasting peace and stability, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Zhao Lijian said on Monday. "Afghanistan is at a critical stage of turnaround from chaos to stability. Security is the prerequisite for the development," he said during his regular briefing in response to a question regarding 4th regional security dialogue on Afghanistan held in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan last week. Senior representatives of Russia, China, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan attended the meeting. External Security Commissioner of Chinese Foreign Ministry, Cheng Guoping represented China at the meeting. Cheng said Afghanistan was the heart of Asia, the development of its security situation would have major impact on regional security and stability. The Global Security Initiative put forward by President Xi Jinping stressed the importance of upholding the new vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security and jointly upholding the world peace and security. China was ready to honour this spirit working in concert with regional countries and support the whole system of Afghanistan while responding to challenges.

Law and order reviewed

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: A meeting to review overall law and order situation in the province was held here on Monday with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair. The meeting minutely discussed future course of action in order to prevent law & order incidents in the province and several important decisions were made at this end. Special Assistant to Chief Minister Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Chief Secretary Dr Shahzad Bangash, Inspector General of Police Muazzam Jah Ansari, Principal Secretary to CM Amjad Ali Khan, Secretary Home

Khushal Khan, Commissioner Peshawar Kiaz Mehsood, CCPO Peshawar Ijaz Khan and other Civil/Military high-ups attended the meeting. The meeting was given a detailed briefing about factors of law & order incidents and steps being taken by the law enforcement agencies to prevent such incidents. The meeting was told that during the last two weeks law enforcement agencies have achieved major achievements against miscreants. The participants were informed that the ratio of street crime has significantly decreased in the provincial capital since the Ababeel Force was established. The meeting on the occasion has decided to make

more recruitments for the newly established Ababeel Force as well as to prepare way forward in order to effectively stop the cultivation of drugs in the certain parts of the province. The chief minister has directed the quarters concerned to chalk out comprehensive plan for providing alternate livelihood opportunities to the drug cultivators further directing them to have special focused on district Bajaur, Khyber and North Waziristan regarding law & order situation. He also directed the authorities to take curative steps against the target killing of security forces and officials of other law enforcing agencies in the province.

PIA likely to resume Skardu flights from three cities

DNA

MULTAN: Pakistan International Airline (PIA) is likely to resume weekly flight to Skardu from Multan, Lahore and Sialkot by last week of June. District Manager PIA, Ghazanfar Akhtar, told this news agency on Monday that the flight would depart at 6am on every Thursday and would return on Sunday morning. He informed that PIA had a plan to resume the flight from start of June, but it has been delayed because of some unavoidable circumstances adding that the round-trip fare would be Rs 26,000 for each passenger. Last year, it was around Rs 22,000, he recalled adding that it will be operated for a couple of months during summer vacation. The A-320 aircraft will be operated for this route. From Islamabad it is already being flown, he stated.

KP CM announces to use force against federal govt

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Mahmood Khan on Monday announced the use of force against federal government. Addressing the Lawyers Convention in Peshawar on Monday, he said that they participated in the long march unarmed in the previous long march but will now use province's force. The KP chief minister also announced to lodge a case against the federal government for martyrdom of party workers and consultation with the legal team is underway in this regard. Mahmood Khan further said that they participated in the previous long march unarmed but will now use KP force when Imran Khan would announce long march. Taking a dig at the Prime Minister, he said Shehbaz Sharif wanted to sell his clothes in Bisham but no one would buy his clothes. Meanwhile, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister, Mahmood Khan here Monday said that no compromise would be made on peace, law and order situation in the province. He said that the law and order situation would be maintained at all costs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The Chief Minister expressed these views while presiding over a high-level meeting on the peace, law, and order situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Chief Minister's special assistant, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Chief Secretary Dr. Shahzad Bangash, IGP Moazzam Jah Jah Ansari and senior officials of law enforcement agencies attended.

Pakistan committed to Palestine cause

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in the Senate Azam Nazeer Tarar on Monday reiterated that there was no change in Pakistan's policy in support of Palestine. "We are firmly committed to our principled stance on the Palestine issue and Israel," Tarar said while responding to a point of order in the Senate. He categorically said, "We will continue to support the just struggle of the people of Palestine. Our state policy on Palestine is very clear." Tarar said, "I will inform the House about the matter after having an official statement from the quarters concerned." After getting complete information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other relevant ministries, he would be in position to tell the House in next session. He questioned, "How can a Pakistani passport holder travel to any such country? Making an official statement on any such story of the newspaper is not an appropriate way."

Nepal Embassy commemorates Mt. Everest Day

H.E. Mr. Tapas Adhikari, Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan, welcomed the guests to the programme and congratulated Mr. Abdul Joshi on his recent ascent to the Mt. Everest on 16 May 2022

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Nepal in Islamabad on Monday organized a programme to celebrate the Mt. Everest Day at the Embassy in Islamabad. The programme was organized to commemorate the first ascent to the Mt. Everest by Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and Edmund Hillary on 29 May 1953. H.E. Mr. Tapas



Adhikari, Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan, welcomed the guests to the programme and congratulated Mr. Abdul Joshi on his recent ascent to the Mt. Everest on 16 May 2022. On the occasion, Ambassador Adhikari expressed his confidence that his expedition will inspire many young Pakistanis for mountaineering and adventure tourism and increase people-to-people contacts between Nepal and Pakistan. He also highlighted the impacts of climate change on the mountains and urged for collectively addressing the negative consequences. During the programme, Mr. Joshi shared his interesting expedition experience while scaling the summit. He also drew many parallels between Nepal and Pakistan, particularly in the field of trekking and tourism. The programme was attended by alpinists and media people from Pakistan. The Embassy officials were also present during the programme.