



Islamabad POST

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Ukraine war can cause global food crisis, warns UN Chief

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The Chief of Naval Staff visits Egypt

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Navjot Sidhu jailed for road rage death

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Briefs

COAS visits School of Artillery

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa Thursday visited School of Artillery, Nowshera, said a statement issued by Inter Services Public Relations. COAS attended the annual Commanding Officers' conference of the Artillery Regiment. COAS also visited various facilities during the visit including War Gaming Arena established to undertake training under simulated battle conditions and to facilitate planning/ conduct of war games/ exercises. COAS was also briefed about new training modules.

Imran to announce date for long march today

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan announced on Thursday that he would give the call for a long march to Islamabad today (Friday). Addressing a group of young people at the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad, the former prime minister said that he would announce his call for the much-awaited long march to Islamabad during his address in Multan tomorrow. "Multan will be the last public gathering before the march towards Islamabad begins. The march towards Islamabad will be for real freedom," Khan said.

Asad urges govt to call elections

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Describing the four-year period of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government as a 'golden era' in the country's history, Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) leader and former federal minister Asad Umar on Thursday asked the present coalition government to immediately call elections given its inability to control the uncertain economic situation. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he said that the economy under the PTI govt progressed at the rate of six per cent.

High-profile cases SC bars any transfers, appointments

Restricts withdrawal of cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday barred authorities from transferring and making new appointments in high-profile cases related to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) as well as those heard by special courts. The orders came from the top court during the hearing in a suo motu case on the perceived apprehension of "persons in authority" undermining the criminal justice system. During the hearing, Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial expressed concerns over transfers and appointments in high-profile cases refraining prosecution from withdrawing such cases. A five-judge larger bench, comprising CJP Bandial and Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Mazhar Ali Akbar, and Justice Mohammad Ali Mazhar heard the case and issued notices to Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) director-general, NAB chairman, and interior secretary. The chief justice noted that several officers were transferred from NAB Lahore and FIA, adding that the FIA's prosecutor in Lahore High Court was also replaced.

ECP to announce decision on dissident MPAs

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is set to announce its verdict in a case pertaining to the 25 dissident members of the Punjab Assembly (MPAs) from PTI tomorrow (Friday). The verdict is expected to be announced at 3pm on Friday. The ECP, which was due to decide the fate of the 25 defecting PTI MPAs who had switched party loyalties ahead of the election of the provincial chief minister, had deferred announcement of the decision a day earlier and said it would first issue notices to the respondents instead. The ECP's verdict gained special significance after the Supreme Court's Tuesday verdict in which - while interpreting Article 63-A of the Constitution - the SC had said the votes of a party's turncoats would not be counted.

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NEW YORK: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari meets Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio. - DNA

Maryam says early elections suit PML-N

Sees no point in staying in power anymore; declares Imran responsible for public woes

DNA

SARGODHA: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz Vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that instead of shouldering the burden of 'filth' left by Imran Khan, the PML-N should quit the government and go for fresh elections. Addressing a public gathering in Sargodha on Thursday, Maryam said that her proposal may make people wonder why PML-N took to the government for only one month. She supplied the answer by saying that Imran Khan had plans for ruling for ten years by rigging the next elections and the PML-N had thwarted those plans by assum-

ing power. Maryam Nawaz asked the supporters whether the PML-N should shoulder the burden of Khan's failure or quit the government and then said, "I am with you. I say that [instead of continue with] a government that crush people under inflation, it is better to say it goodbye. Say it goodbye and come out in the field of people and compete."

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belgium Philippe Bronchain presenting a souvenir to Federal Minister for Defense, Khawaja Asif. - DNA

Army soldier martyred in IED blast

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army soldier embraced martyrdom in an improvised explosive device (IED) attack in the South Waziristan district, the military said in a statement on Thursday. The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said the IED blast targeted the military convoy when it was passing through the Maken area of the South Waziristan district. As a result, 39-year-old Havaldar Muhammad Sanwar, a resident of Jhelum, lost his life. "The area clearance operation is being carried out to eliminate terrorists in the area," the ISPR added. Meanwhile, a terrorist was gunned down during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Mir Ali area of North Waziristan. The military's public affairs wing said the security forces faced resistance from terrorists as they launched the IBO in the area, and resultantly, one terrorist was killed during an exchange of fire. The slain terrorist was identified as Muhammad Altaf, the ISPR said. Weapon and ammunition were also recovered from the terrorist.

Govt imposes ban on non-essential items' import

Info Minister says the government will hold elections "when it wishes to"



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Mariyum Aurangzeb announced Thursday the federal government has devised an economic plan in a bid to take the country out of the financial turmoil and, "for the first time", a complete ban has been imposed on luxury or non-essential items. "This is an emergency situation and Pakistanis will have to make sacrifices under the economic plan. This will have a quick impact on foreign reserves."

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Ban to save precious foreign exchange: PM

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: PM Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the decision to ban the import of luxury items will save the country's precious foreign exchange, vowing to take similar measures to overcome the economic challenges at hand. "We will practice austerity and financially stronger people must lead in this effort so that the less privileged among us do not have to bear this burden inflicted on them by the PTI government," PM Shehbaz said in a Twitter post. He added: "Together we will overcome all the challenges with resolve and determination, InshaAllah!" A day earlier, the prime minister gave the go-ahead to a temporary ban on the imports of around three-dozen goods - essential and luxury items - but refused to slap regulatory duties to curb imports.

Iran rejects allegations regarding KU blast

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iran has rejected the allegations circulating in media about alleged links of Karachi University blast to Iran. The embassy in Islamabad stated, "In response to questions from some respected Pakistani media reporters about allegations that the perpetrators of the Karachi terrorist bombings may have links to Iran, the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan categorically reject and deny such allegations; stressing that the allegations were made in public and in the media without providing any evidence, proof or documents to the government of

the Islamic Republic of Iran through official means and this is completely unprofessional and unacceptable". The embassy further said that those who act in this way are thought to give the wrong address and project the false blame. Undoubtedly, a third party seeks to destroy the brotherly and friendly relations between Iran and Pakistan. Officials and those involved in the media are advised not to fall into the trap of enemies of close relations between Iran and Pakistan. "Respected members of the media and truth-seeking journalists are requested to follow the content only through official channels and credible sources, and to reflect on it after ensuring its credibility" it concluded.

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Israel will not investigate Journalist's killing: Report - Page 08

Turkey to reject Sweden, Finland NATO bid

Finland and Sweden formally applied on Wednesday to join US-led NATO, a decision spurred by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Turkey's objections have come as a surprise to the other members of the alliance

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISTANBUL: Turkey has told allies that it will reject Sweden and Finland's membership to NATO, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said in a video posted on his Twitter account on Thursday. Finland and Sweden formally applied on Wednesday to join U.S.-led NATO, a decision spurred by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Turkey's objections have come as a surprise to the other members of the alliance. "We will continue our policy in a determined way. We have told allies that we will say no to Finland and Sweden's NATO membership," Erdogan said in an interview with students late on Wednesday. The Turkish president said Sweden and Finland harbour and finance "terrorists" and supply them with weapons, repeating Ankara's accusation that the countries supports groups that it deems terrorists, namely the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group and Syrian Kurdish YPG, which it also views as a terrorist group closely tied to the PKK. "NATO is a security alliance and we cannot accept terrorists

Biden meets leaders of Finland, Sweden

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: U.S. President Joe Biden met the leaders of Sweden and Finland on Thursday after the nations set aside their long-standing neutrality and moved to join the NATO alliance in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Hours before his first trip to Asia as president, Biden sat down with Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Finnish President Sauli Niinistö at the White House to discuss their NATO applications. "This is a historic event, a watershed

moment in European security. Two nations with a long tradition of neutrality will be joining the world's most powerful defensive alliance," said White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan. Biden has made uniting Europe against Russia's invasion of Ukraine a top priority. Turkey has raised questions about including Finland and Sweden in the alliance, asking Sweden to halt support for Kurdish militants it considers to be part of a terrorist group and both to lift their bans on some sales of arms to Turkey. Sullivan told reporters on Wednesday that U.S. officials are confident Turkey's concerns can be addressed, and Biden told reporters "I think we're going to be okay," on the issue.



to be in it," Erdogan also said. Accession of new states requires consensus among existing members, and that's where Ankara comes in. Turkey, which joined the alliance three years after it was established in 1949 and has the group's second largest army, has said it won't support the bids unless its demands are met. Turkey could stall Sweden joining NATO. See what PM says about negotiating with them. Erdogan accused the two countries of harboring members of the separatist militant Kurdistan's Workers Party, also known as PKK. The PKK, which seeks an independent state in Turkey, has been in an armed struggle with that country for decades and has been designated a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. He said on Wednesday that Sweden should not expect Turkey to approve its bid without returning "terrorists," and Swedish and Finnish delegations should not come to Turkey to convince it to back their membership in the alliance. US President Joe Biden was set to meet Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Finnish President Sauli Niinistö at the White House to discuss their NATO applications on Thursday.

Fresh polio cases are a cause of major concern

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Resurfacing of fresh polio cases is a cause of major concern for Pakistan and hence the government must revisit its policies and strategies to make Pakistan polio free at the earliest, said Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI). Talking to Mr. Abdur Raheem Cheema Divisional Coordinator Polio Eradication Committee, President FCCI said that the business community has always appreciated the positive and productive efforts of the government in addition to lending its full support to the concerned departments. He said that Pakistan remained polio free for a short period of one and half year but new cases have shattered our efforts to make Pakistan

permanently polio free. He said that apart from the government's efforts, parents must be motivated to save their children from this crippling disease. He said that the industrial and business communities have played their due role and because of their support, now the children of their workers and employees are safe as they are repeatedly giving polio drops to their children. He assured that FCCI would play its role in highlighting the dangerous impacts of this virus on the younger generation by uploading the most attractive and convincing messages on FCCI website. He said that industrial workers would be especially focused and sensitized to give polio drops to their children during repeated campaigns. He said that no new case of polio virus has been detected from Punjab but as a large number of workers from KPK

are also employed in local industrial units and are also settled here along with their families hence their children may carry this virus. He said that our focus should be on the families that migrated from KPK to Faisalabad. Parents from this province should also be motivated to dispense polio drops to their children up to the age of five years during the upcoming anti-polio campaign. Mr. Abdur Raheem Cheema said that Nigeria, Pakistan and Afghanistan were the only three remaining countries where polio virus was prevalent. He said that Nigeria has been declared polio free and now only Pakistan and Afghanistan have this deadly virus. He said that a polio campaign would be launched from May 23-29 during which 1.4 million children would be given polio drops in Faisalabad.

Thai ambassador celebrates Vesak Day at Taxila museum



DNA

TAXILA: Ambassador Chakkir Krachaiwong participated in the Takshasila Vesak Day Festival at Taxila organized by Center for Culture and Development to celebrate the occasion of Vesak day

along with Ambassadors of Nepal and High Commissioner of Sri Lanka as well as a number of Buddhists in Pakistan. On the occasion, Ambassador gave a remarks regarding the importance of the day, admiring the inter-faith harmony in Pakistan and Thailand's

contribution to Gandhara tourism in Pakistan through various projects including the Bell of Peace and the establishment of a splendid container of the lord buddha relics at Taxila museum to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Thai-Pak relations this year. The Ambassador also vis-

ited Monastery and Stupa of Mohra Muradu. Upon arrival, he was warmly welcomed by local students in smart uniforms. On the television interview, Ambassador expected to see more people visiting Pakistan to explore the beautiful country and meet friendly and generous Pakistanis.

Quli Mirza briefed the meeting via video link about the performance from 2017 to April 30, 2022. Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza informed the meeting that four accused persons were convicted by different accountability courts of Karachi under section 10 of NAO-1999 during the period from January 2022 to April 30, 2022. DG NAB-Karachi informed the meeting that in 2021, 53 persons were convicted by different Accountability Courts under section 10 of NAO-1999 during the year 2021, due to the efforts of NAB-Karachi. 24 persons were also convicted by different Accountability Courts under section. The meeting was informed that 56 persons were convicted by different accountability courts during the year 2019, due to the efforts of NAB-Karachi under section 10 of NAO-1999. 72 persons were convicted by different Accountability Courts during the year 2018. Similarly, 13 persons were convicted in 2017, by different accountability courts. Speaking on the occasion, Justice Javed Iqbal said the excellent performance of NAB Karachi under the supervision of Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza has contributed significantly in augmenting the overall performance of NAB. - APP

Sindh Govt initiates action against terrorists

KARACHI: Advisor to chief minister of Sindh on Law Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Thursday said that action has been initiated against the terrorists involved in the recent terrorist incidents in Karachi. He said that according to the report of Terrorism Department (CTD) Sindh spokesperson, two terrorists of the banned outfit reportedly involved in the bomb blast in Saddar area were killed in the operation and two terrorists were arrested and explosives and weapons were recovered, said a statement. He said that the operation under Sindh CTD was a testament to the fact that the Sindh government was committed to fight terrorism and was taking all possible steps to fully and promptly investigate terrorism taking place anywhere in the province and bring the terrorists involved to justice. He said that everyone, including the police and intelligence agencies, must work together to rid the city of this menace. Barrister Murtaza said that citizens also have a responsibility to help and co-operate with law enforcement agencies in this regard. He said that after the recent terrorist attacks in the city, special teams were formed on the orders of Additional IG CTD that formulated a strategy and a comprehensive plan against terrorism "The law enforcers are using the latest technology and intelligence tools and in a result, the network of the banned Sindh separatist organization Sindh Revolutionary Army (SRA) was broken." - APP



RAWALPINDI: Group photo of the delegation led by RCCI President Nadeem Rauf after meeting President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry. - DNA

Macroeconomic variables of the economy of Pakistan and policies to enhance GDP

UMAR FAROOQ

THE macroeconomic variables of any economy are its Balance of Payments (BoP), BoP shows the number of imports against exports. If exports are greater than imports then it reflects the positive BoP, else if imports are higher than exports then it shows that BoP is negative. As per Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the current Balance of Payment of Pakistan shows that the exports were 55145 and imports were 74340 in FY 2018. The exports were fallen by 53582 and imports were fallen to 66751 in FY 2022. The other variable is Unemployment. It

means that the people are willing and able to perform the work but are unable to find any job. The current unemployment rate in Pakistan is 4.65% which is quite higher than 2019, which was 3.98%. The next variable is inflation rate. Inflation shows the sustainable rise in the prices of commodities. The are two types of inflation, cost push when prices of commodities go high, there prices are increased by suppliers. The other type is demand pull inflation. It occurs when demand from customers side increases. The demand is artificially rise which causes inflation. The inflation rate of Pakistan in 2020 was expected at 10.74%, which was 6.74% in 2019, and 3.93% in 2018. The other factor is econom-

ic growth which can be measured by gross domestic products GDP. GDP shows the total goods being produced in any economy. The GDP of Pakistan in 2020 was 263.7 USD as per world bank. The GDP of Pakistan can be improved if some wise steps are taken. It can be improved by rising the consumption of the economy. It can also be improved if Balance of Payment goes favorable. To improve the consumption government, need to focus on monetary policies regarding interest rates and taxes etc. If the tax rates and interest rates are reduced than it will encourage the investors to invest in the economy as they have to pay less money to government regulatory. The local people of the economy will

also be encouraged to get loans and invest in small businesses. They will have more disposable income to invest. The other factor is improving Balance of Payments, it can also be possible if government provides subsidies to the producers. It will help them to be cost effective. Their goods would be cheaper in the international markets. This will help to rise exports and decrease imports as people prefer to buy cheap and domestic products instead of buying expensive items. There should be policies for supporting the domestic producers and reducing the number of exports. This will help to enhance the GDP.

- The writer is a student in SZABIST Islamabad Campus



ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov calls on Murtaza Javed Abbasi, Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs. - DNA

Asif Zardari calls on Ch Shujaat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President Asif Ali Zardari arrived at the residence of Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam (PML-Q) President, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on Thursday evening. The former president thanked Chaudhry Shujaat for his full support of the Unity government. The former president said to Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain that he is a very important ally of the government and the PPP will continue consultations with him. The former president took Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain into confidence on the current political situation. Also present on the occasion were Federal Ministers Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Tariq Bashir Cheema, Chaudhry Shafi Hussain, PML-Q MNA Ms. Farrukh Khan and former PPP MNA Rukhsana Bangash.

Admin imposes Rs 444,000 fines

RAWALPINDI, May 19 (APP): Rawalpindi District Administration conducted 1554 raids in seven tehsils of the district to check profiteering during last 24 hours and imposed Rs 444,000 fines on 246 violators while three shops were sealed and four violators were sent behind the bars. According to a district administration spokesman, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Noor ul Amin Mengal while chairing a meeting on Thursday reviewed performance of Price Control Magistrates. During the meeting, the Commissioner was informed that strict action in accordance with the law was being taken against profiteers, hoarders and the violators were being imposed heavy fines. - APP

Dahi Markaz Mall for women has been set up

BUREAU REPORT

Faisalabad: The Dahi Markaz Mall for women has been set up in AC office of Tehsil City which was formally inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad after cutting the ribbon and unveiling the plaque. ADCR Abid Hussain, AC City and Sadar Sahibzada Muhammad Yousaf and Umar Maqbool were also present. Women patwari has been assigned duty in the markaz. The Deputy Commissioner

visited the center and inspected the services provided to the women in the DMM and asked the in charge to provide speedy services to the women applicant. And their dignity and respect should not be diminished. The Deputy Commissioner said that the women belonging to Tehsil City can contact the center for acquisition of Farad, registration of transfers of land and other matters of land. He appreciated the efforts of AC city regarding establishment of Women DMM and in Tehsil Jaranwala

Women Dahi Markaz Mall was also run. He informed that DMM were working in the every Quangui of district and for provide services to women the separate centers have been setting up alongwith Women patwari to look after. He said that innovation, services and dignity are being kept in mind. The Assistant Commissioner City apprised of the aims and objectives of the establishment of DMM for Women and thanked the Deputy Commissioner for inaugurating it.

UN Resident Coordinator calls on AJK President

MIRPUR (AJK): Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry said on Tuesday that for effective management, federal and other UN agencies should lend their support and assistance so that the environment in the cities and towns of Azad Kashmir could be improved. The AJK president said this while talking to the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Pakistan Mr. Julien Harneis who had called on him at Kashmir House in the federal metropolis. Miss Florence Rolle, Representative of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization in Paki-

stan and other members of the team were present in the meeting. Speaking on the occasion, the president while referring to AJK's potential in the field of agriculture said that the southern parts of the state have a vast agricultural land where crops could be grown in abundance. He said that besides focusing on agriculture there was dire need to provide the provision of clean drinking water to people. "Similarly, steps are needed to be taken to improve education and health sector", he added. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Harneis said that the indicators of human

development in Azad Kashmir were better than the other provinces of Pakistan. He further said that tourism was an essential part of economic development that needed to be promoted to generate economic activity in the region. Pertinently, Mr. Julien Harneis and his team met the president to seek his suggestions regarding the Living Indus Basin Initiative that seeks to repair and restore natural resources and ecosystem of the basin. Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry on the occasion briefed Mr. Harneis, about the prevailing political and human rights situation in the Indian occupied Kashmir.

Over 8.328m people vaccinated against Covid-19 in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD: Over 8.328 million people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im said on Thursday that 4,621,385 people were injected first dose while 3,623,915 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He further said that 39,854 health workers were also given first dose while 43,470 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. As of now 80,648 first doses and 53,766 second doses were in the stock. He said that 37 vaccination centers and 20 mobile vaccination camps were operational in

Faisalabad where registered people were being vaccinated. In order to facilitate the people these centers had been established in various areas of the city including Allied Hospital, District Head Quarters Hospital, Government General Hospital G.M Abad, Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology, Government General Hospital Samanabad, Children Hospital, sports Complex Samanabad, Tehsil Head Quarters Hospital Jaranwala, Samundri, Tandianwala, Chak Jhumra, Sports Complex Chak Jhumra, Sports Complex Jaranwala, Government General Hospital Chak 224-RB, New Building RHC Khurrianwala, RHC Chak 374-GB and Chak 469-GB, he added. - APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

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



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EU funds boost capacity, save lives at Hayatabad Complex

ISLAMABAD: As part of a concerted effort to strengthen the delivery of health services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province in Pakistan, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency handed over critical and advanced medical equipment to the Hayatabad Medical Complex (HMC) radiology department. According to a press release issued here on Thursday, equipment, which includes a state-of-the-art CT scanner, will benefit both refugees and host communities and save lives. It was handed over at a ceremony attended by the hospital medical team, UNHCR, and representatives of the European Union. UNHCR's head of office in Peshawar, Gay-

rat Ahmadshoev, delivered the essential equipment which will speed up the diagnostic tests carried out on patients in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The CT scanner will provide high-resolution images with low doses of radiation and allow scans to be performed on between 30 to 40 patients a day. The contribution will enhance the capacity of the Radiology Department to deliver efficient and high-quality diagnostic and therapeutic services, and ease pressure on public services, through the European Union's programme of support. In addition to the CT scanner for the Hayatabad Medical Complex, the European

Union also funded critical equipment for the Thalassemia Unit including refrigerators, plasma extractors, transfusion chairs, blood bank centrifuges, and equipment for the Gastro-enterology Unit such as endoscopy ultrasound and scanning systems. Commending the generosity of the people of Pakistan for hosting Afghan refugees for over 40 years, Wim Riepma, Delegation of the European Union, underscored the commitment of the EU to supporting refugees and host communities through a three-year funded programme covering Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, which focuses on strengthening health, education, livelihoods, and protection

activities. The contribution builds on EU development support for Afghans and host communities in Pakistan since 2018. Shehzad Akbar, Medical Director for HMC, extended their gratitude on behalf of those who access health services at the hospital. Strengthening access to healthcare and other supported programmes are aimed at assisting both refugee and host community members as part of an international effort and contribution towards communities who have generously shared their resources with refugees for decades in coordination with the Commissionerate of Afghan Refugees and line authorities. - APP

3 FIA officials terminated

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has dismissed three officials including one inspector and two sub-inspectors from service on charges of misconduct, misuse of power and corruption. Those who have been dismissed from service include; inspector Shabbir Ahmed Chandio of Karachi Zone, sub-inspector Gulzar Ahmad of Faisalabad Zone and sub-inspector Uzma Aslam of Lahore Zone, said the FIA spokesperson on Thursday. Similarly, disciplinary action was taken against sub-inspector Sanjay Kumar who has been awarded punishment of forfeiture of one year approved service while the appeal of driver constable Tauqeer Abbas has been rejected, the Spokesman said. - APP

NHA regularly conducts surveys of its roads

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority (NHA) regularly conducts annual condition surveys of its roads and highways to assess the damage. According to official documents, road maintenance is an ongoing process and its deterioration is a regular occurrence. An official of NHA told APP that on the special directives of Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services, Mufi Asad Mahmood, the top priority would be given to the repair and reconstruction of roads in all four provinces including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). He said that highways were playing a vital role in the promotion of industries, trade, agriculture, and tourism. The official said that maintenance work was being carried out in all zones including North Zone, Central Zone, South Zone, West Zone, AJK, and Motorways network. - APP

PR procures modern coaches, first batch to arrive in May

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 out of the procured coaches the first batch would be arriving by end of May, that "The high power locomotives, 4,000 horse power have been procured to enhance pay load for maximizing freight revenue." He said the process for installing Radio Frequency Identification System over the railway network has been initiated which would transform department on modern lines by effective and efficient monitoring of rolling stock. The process for installing Automatic Train Protection (ATP) in locomotives has been initiated and would operational after the complete installation of Computer Based Interlocking (CBI) at 31 stations, he added. - APP

Five new corona cases reported

RAWALPINDI: Five more people were diagnosed with fatal coronavirus during the last 24 hours, raising the district's tally of confirmed cases to 46,582. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Thursday, the total infected cases included 43,076 from Rawalpindi and 3,506 from other districts. Among the news cases, three had arrived from Rawalpindi Cantonment and two from the Taxila area. "Presently, 20 confirmed patients are quarantined at homes and no one at health facilities", the report added. The report further said that 6,827,143 people, including 44,778 health workers, had jabbed themselves against the lethal coronavirus (COVID-19) across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10, 2021. - APP

Four healthcare establishments sealed in capital

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) has sealed four Healthcare Establishments (HCEs) in different areas of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) over malpractices. According to IHRA, the inspection teams carried out inspections of 38 Healthcare Establishments (HCEs) in different areas of ICT during the past two weeks. Satti lab, Kubra Medical Center, Aziz Medical Center and Khattak Clinic were sealed due to different malpractices like not getting registered with IHRA, absence of qualified staff, issuance of fake test reports and keeping veterinary vials in healthcare

facility. Nawaz hospital and Yousafzai Medical Centre services were suspended for keeping expired test tubes and reagents, unhygienic conditions and absence of proper waste management system while partial services of two other healthcare establishments were suspended. Lab and ultrasound services of Pure Health Lab, cancer markers and bile acid test services of Islamabad Diagnostic Center were suspended. Similarly, 22 healthcare establishments were served notices for minor non-compliances and instructed to comply with the directions given by the inspection teams. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking interest in pieces of art during an exhibition at Tanzara Art Gallery. - DNA

Second Pakistan Energy Reform Summit 2022 held

ISLAMABAD: To tap into the new era of the country's energy, the 2nd Pakistan Energy Reforms Summit 2020 (PERS-2022) was held here this week, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. The aim of the Summit was to help revitalize the energy and power sector in Pakistan by attracting multilateral cooperation of innovation and investment in a diverse energy mix. There were more than

50 speakers including officials of Chinese companies, around 400 delegates and over 30 sponsors and exhibitors. Speakers highlighted the importance of renewable energy in the modern era and shared ideas and proposals on how Pakistan can achieve the target of 30% renewable energy in total power generation by 2030. They emphasized over the expansion of renewable energy in

Pakistan's energy mix and encouraged supporting independent power producers in solar energy. Hashim Raza, CEO K-Solar (China) said that it is time to increase solar power generation in Pakistan. The expansion of solar power will not only enable Pakistan to meet its growing demand of power but will also help support the issue of climate change. - APP

NADRA offices facilitating diaspora Pakistanis

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Database and Registration Authority Muhammad Tariq Malik called on Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi here on Thursday. During the meeting, the Minister pointed out the issues and difficulties faced by expatriates in accessing NADRA services, said a press release here.

Overseas Pakistanis are a valuable asset of the country and all possible steps would be taken for their welfare, he added. Chairman NADRA said that centres set up abroad had been restored for compatriots. The federal minister was briefed that the main branches of NADRA offices in Pakistan now have dedicated counters for overseas Pakistanis to provide facilitation and technical support. A follow-up meeting in this regard would be held the next week.

Decision to reduce imports laudable

Govt should look after the benefit of the people instead of the exporters and traders

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Thursday said the decision to ban the import of luxury items is correct but not enough. The decision will reduce the import bill by only one billion dollars per month therefore more items should be added to this list to strengthen foreign exchange reserves and the rupee, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the country is facing an unprecedented crisis of edible oil and rice which needs to be resolved while the export of food items should be banned completely. The flight of the dollar should be stopped because it is affecting the economy and no one will be safe from its effects, he added. The business leader said that ban on the import of these luxury items alone would prove to be insufficient. We do

not need apples from New Zealand, Swiss chocolates, French water, Australian fruits, American ketchup, Italian ice-creams and imported seafood. Banning foreign travel aimed at leisure would save \$1.5 billion which should be considered by our policymakers, he stressed. He said that Indonesia has banned the export of edible oil since April 28, which is increasing its price all over the world, including Pakistan. India has slashed tariffs to reduce the price of edible oil, but no decision has been taken in Pakistan which is surprising. Mr. Butt said that there was a need to ban the export of rice and curb hoarding which was causing its price to rise sharply. The government should look after the benefit of the people instead of the exporters and traders. Inflation is rising rapidly due to the continuous increase in the value of the US dollar which is also affecting exports.



ISLAMABAD: Girls on their way back after fetching fresh drinking water from water filtration plant in the capital city. - APP

Rs1,949.72 million released for 13 petroleum sector projects in 10 months

ISLAMABAD: The government has released funds amounting to Rs1,949.72 million to execute seven ongoing and six new petroleum-related projects during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP 2021-22) against a total allocation of Rs3,249.54 million. Out of the total disbursement of Rs1,949.72 million, around Rs586.54 million have been spent on petroleum projects during a 10-month period (July-April) of the current fiscal year to accelerate oil and gas exploration activities and achieve self-sufficiency in the energy sector, according to official data available with APP. As per the PSDP document, funds

amounting to Rs1,473.683 million had been earmarked for seven ongoing schemes, out of which Rs 263 million were meant for the establishment of the National Minerals Data Centre (NMDC), Rs345.321 for the Expansion and Up-gradation of Pakistan Petroleum Core House (PETCORE), Rs30 million for Geological Mapping on 50 Toposheets, out of 354 unmappped Toposheets of Outcrop Area of Balochistan Province, Rs385.336 million for strengthening and up-gradation of Karachi Laboratories Complex (KLC) at HDIP Operations Office, Karachi, Rs 76.580 million for the supply of 13.5 MMCFD gas at Doorstep (Zero Point) of Dhabaji Special Economic Zone (SEZ)

Sindh, Rs 230 million for the supply of 30 MMCFD gas at Doorstep (Zero Point) of Rashakai Special Economic Zone (SEZ) and Rs143.446 million for up-gradation of POL testing facilities of HDIP at Islamabad, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar, Quetta and ISO Certification of Petroleum Testing Laboratory at Islamabad. Similarly, for six new schemes, the government had earmarked Rs1,775.857 in the PSDP, out of which Rs40 million were kept for the development of Strategic Underground Gas Storages (SUGS) - hiring of consultancy services for Bankable feasibility study and transaction advisory services (PC-II), Rs30 million for Legal Consultancy Services for drafting of

Model Mineral Agreement and updating of Regulatory Framework (Federal and Provincial Minerals/Coal Departments) prepared by Mineral Wing, Petroleum Division, Rs40 million for Pakistan National Research Programme on Geological Hazards (Earthquakes and Landslides) - Data Acquisition along Active Faults and Identification of Potential Landslides Hotspot Zones, Rs73.447 million for the supply of 10 MMCFD RLNG to Bostan Special Economic Zone, Rs149.410 million for the supply of 13 MMCFD RLNG to Bin Qasim Industrial Park and Rs785 million for the supply of 40 MMCFD gas/RLNG to Allama Iqbal Industrial City Special Economic Zone (SEZ). - APP

Briefs

WWF, PCRWR
sign LoI to
support
Water
Initiative

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) and the World Wild Fund for Nature-Pakistan (WWF-Pak) have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to support the implementation of Australia-Pakistan Water Security Initiative (APWASI) in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Under the South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI), APWASI being funded by the Australian Government through Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) includes Water Sensitive Urban Design Demonstration Projects. During the ceremony, Ms. Farah Nadeem, Specialist Liaison and Engagement APWASI shared an overview of the activities to be implemented under this LoI. Mr. Hamid Naqi Khan, DG WWF-Pakistan in his remarks highlighted the partnership background with PCRWR. He appreciated the science based professional approach of PCRWR to address the water challenges. He expected that this partnership would be further strengthened through joint working under APWASI.

Afterwards, Dr. Muhammad Ashraf provided an overview of PCRWR initiatives to address water issues of the country. He assured the PCRWR support to WWF Pakistan for APWASI activities being undertaken in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. After remarks, Letter of Intent was formally signed by Dr. Muhammad Ashraf (Chairman, PCRWR) and Mr. Hamid Naqi Khan (DG, WWF-Pak). - APP

PTA, NHMP
sign MoU for
collaboration

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) here on Thursday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for collaboration on areas of mutual interest. "The cooperation and collaboration between the two organizations in areas of mutual interest will have a resounding impact at national level especially where high speed connectivity and quality digital services throughout motorways of Pakistan are concerned", said a news release issued here. The areas of collaboration include establishing a coordination mechanism enabling smooth working relations, enhancing voice and data connectivity and coverage on motorways; knowledge sharing regarding optimum use of future technologies and latest developments in the telecom sector. It also includes capacity building on the experience and knowledge available to organizations and conducting sessions, discussion forums, training on relevant issues and technological advancements. The event was attended by Chairman PTA, Inspector General NHMP; Member Compliance and Enforcement (C&E) PTA and senior officers of PTA and NHMP. Speaking on the occasion, Chairman PTA, Maj Gen Amir Azeem Bajwa (R) said that PTA is working to ensure that Pakistanis have access to high quality services and benefit from ubiquitous coverage. - APP

Robbers'
gang busted;
valuables
recovered

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police has busted a notorious robbers gang known as sallo gang and recovered snatched cash, mobile phone and weapons. A team of Shalimar Police Station (PS) headed by SHO Suleman Shah along with other officials apprehended two accused of a robbers gang later identified as Suleman alias sallo and Shehbaz, said a news release. During preliminary investigation, the accused have confessed their involvement in looting women on gunpoint coming for shopping in markets in posh sectors of G-9, F-8, F-10, F-11 and blue area. They were involved in nine cases of robberies registered at PS Shalimar. The accused have been sent to jail on judicial remand for identification parade. - APP

Water Shortage
Pakistan needs efficient
governance, technology

Pakistan's water resources may decline to a drastic level in near future

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The experts on Thursday said Pakistan was at the brink of becoming a water scarce nation due to aggravating temperature rise and climate change which demanded improved water pricing and governance to avert the looming threat of shortage. The water experts, members of the diplomatic community, academia, government departments and media made these remarks at the inauguration of the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Pakistan liaison office here which was inaugurated by Deputy Director General, IWMI Dr. Rachael McDonnell. Ms McDonnell also gave a presentation on climate change impacts on water resources availability in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, she said "IWMI uses research for development approach to implement three strategic programs includes Water, Food and Ecosystems; Water, Climate Change and Resilience; and Water, Growth and Inclusion, to support the efforts of the Government of Pakistan to meet its targets under the Sustainable Development Goals." Dr. Rachael added, "Our priorities - co-developed with federal ministries, provincial governments and development partners are aimed to support the design and implementation of effective policies



around water, food and climate. It would also include to improve water use efficiency and productivity; and build stronger water institutions at all levels. Key research areas include disaster risk monitoring and climate resilience, water resources assessment, irrigation modernization, agricultural water management and capacity development." She added that the glacier waters contributed 60-70% of the total discharge which was used for irrigation purposes. Chairman of Federal Flood Commission (FFC) Ahmed Kamal said the country had very limited resources but it was highly prone to natural disasters putting huge burden on its resources. Chairman of Pakistan Council of

Research on Water Resources (PCRWR) Dr Muhammad Ashraf said the growing water scarcity and inadequate storage were leading the country to touch absolute water scarcity level by 2025. "If the water resources remain same and population continues to rise at the same place then it will make the country a water scarce nation." He underlined that the way forward was very simple as implementation of national water policy, and climate change policy in its true letter and spirit would help overcome the crisis as both were very comprehensive documents. "It is also recommended to ensure 100% water metering in urban sector, use of technology and early warning system can help

improve cultivation and crop sowing practices in the age of rising environmental degradation," he added. Development Specialist and Water Expert from USAID Muhammad Nawaz said the water governance was a chain of stakeholders where everyone was playing its role to ensure resolution of water crisis and access for all.

"Pakistan's water resources may decline to a drastic level in near future if business as usual continues." Responding to queries, he said "the water market has a huge potential in Pakistan. Water pricing needs to be introduced as the poor and under privileged will bear the brunt. The people owning thousands of acres land should pay because it's everyone's water." Water governance, he said, was the major driver scaling up Pakistan's water scarcity irrespective of the water available to the country.

Country Representative - Pakistan and Regional Representative - Central Asia, IWMI, Dr. Mohsin Hafeez said "we have field offices in Okara, Rahim Yar Khan and DI Khan, and this liaison office in Islamabad will improve coordination with stakeholders and address the growing water challenge." Remarks on IWMI and Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) collaboration for sustainable irrigation development in Pakistan, were given by Chairman, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) Dr Ghulam Mohammad Ali

Experts for
making anti-polio
drive a success

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on Thursday called upon members of civil society, media fraternity, and religious scholars to play an active role in eradicating polio from the country and urged parents to shun propaganda by opponents of anti-polio vaccination to ensure the safety of their children from being crippled by poliomyelitis. The government should also devise an awareness campaign to convince parents to administer polio to save their child's future disability, health expert Dr. Waseem Khawaja said while talking to Radio Pakistan.

Parents should get into their heads that polio vaccination is a matter for our future generations and the government will not allow

anyone to sabotage the national drive, he added. It is better to get your children vaccinated rather than regretting the rest of your life, he mentioned. Vice-Chancellor & Dean, Health Services Academy Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan said that it is a fact that polio virus can be still effective even in .01 percent of children, adding, that in the past few years, no polio case was reported. But unfortunately, there are some families that are hesitant to administer polio drops to their children. Pakistan is the only country where door-to-door campaigns for polio vaccination are carried out, he said, adding, that the world's eyes are focused on Pakistan and our health authorities are making hectic efforts to eradicate the virus. - APP

India has imposed ban
on every form of individual

ISLAMABAD: All Parties Hurriyat Conference senior leader, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq said that through the use of extreme force and intimidation, the Indian authorities have implemented a complete ban on any form of individual or collective expression by people or the leadership, giving no space and no scope for it.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who is under house detention for the last almost three years now, since August 2019, in a statement issued in Srinagar said while leadership is jailed confined and incarcerated, repression on one side and disempowerment and marginalization of people of IIOJK on the other, simultaneously continue unabated. He said, the recent brazen recommendations of the Indian government's delimitation commission is another step towards implementing demographic change by way of reducing Muslim representation in occupied territory and gradually changing its Muslim majority character. He deplored that vengeful termination from service of Muslim em-



ployees in government service, the main source of employment for locals goes on, arrests of youth or any 'so-called anti-India Kashmiri' now even including women, happens on a daily basis. The APHC leader said, "Killing of civilians during military operations has again surfaced as 22-year Shoaib Ahmed was killed in cold blood while local media censorship, harassment and intimidation of journalists and writers gets firmer, the list is endless." He said the situation on ground, bad

enough, seems only to worsen, adding that people have been forced to silence by intimidation, and its result cannot be peace. "At this time as we pay tribute to our beloved leaders Shaheed-e-Millat Mirwaiz Molvi Mohammad Farooq and Shaheed-e-Hurriyat Khawaja Abdul Lone, on their approaching martyrdom anniversary on 21st May.

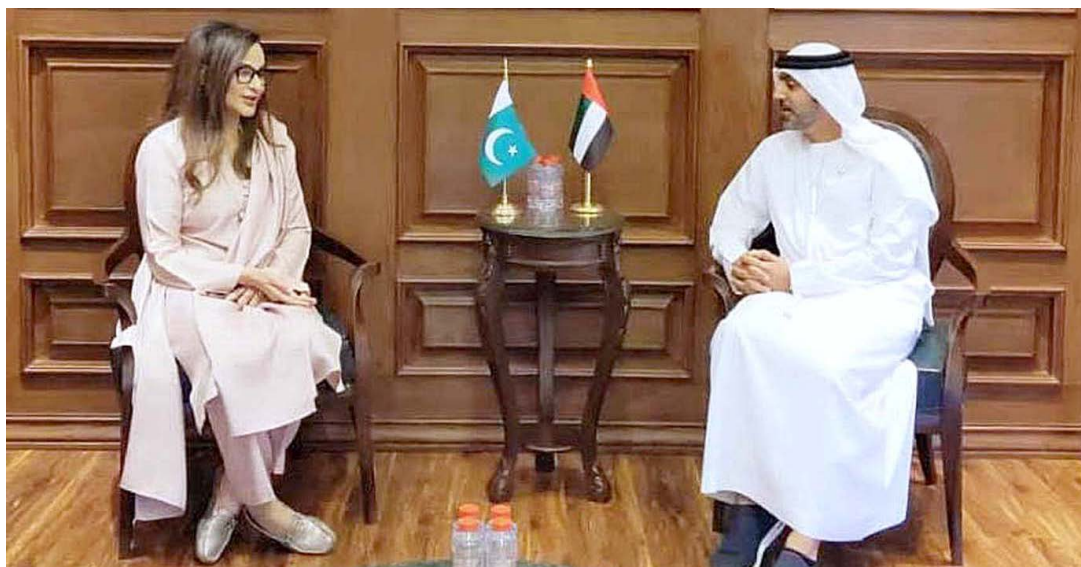
We believe that their path of seeking peaceful resolution of the Kashmir conflict in keeping with the wishes of its people, while considering the interests of both India and Pakistan as parties to the conflict, is the way out of this, and the way forward.

It is also the way to peace and prosperity for the region. Hegemonic authority, use of force or intimidation of people, only complicate the conflict further," he added. The Mirwaiz said the sufferings of the people and the sacrifices rendered by them in quest of the resolution, constantly remind us that the Kashmir dispute has to be resolved and the Kashmiris' sentiment honored. - APP

Sherry Rehman condoles
demise of UAE President

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change on Thursday visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Embassy in the Capital to meet the UAE ambassador, to offer condolences on the passing away of President of the United Arab Emirates Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. On the occasion, Senator Sherry Rehman said, "In the demise of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa, the UAE has lost a visionary and statesman, who profoundly transformed the country. Pakistan has also lost a sincere friend and partner who made invaluable contributions towards strengthening fraternal ties between the two countries."

Yumna and
Merub shares
adorable video

ISLAMABAD: The beautiful duo from popular serial Sin-e-Aahan treated their fans with a rocking musical video gaining lots of appreciation and love in return. Among the most talented actresses in Pakistan, both Yumna Zaidi and Merub Ali have been praised for their superb bonding in army-based drama serial in which they played the role of sisters as Shaista Khanzada and Gul Khanzada. Recently both actors took it to social media and uploaded a video, jamming on a song together and giving all time sibling vibes. "It's the part 2, continue to 3, said Zaidi while singing along with Ali. "The Dhillon sisters reunite," stated the video caption. - APP

HEC
embarks
textbook
writing
program

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has embarked upon the Textbook Writing Support Programme (TWSP) to enhance the competitiveness in Research and Development and to create a strong team of authors in the country by broadening the authorship cadre.

According to official sources on Thursday, potential author must have at least three years consecutive experience of teaching (graduate/undergraduate level) in HEC recognised public/private sector universities/institutes across the country) that particular course, in which he/she intends to write a textbook.

The authors may write on diverse/selected topics following HEC approved curricula in new emerging fields such as Information Technology, Robotics, Biotechnology, as well as Basic Sciences, Social Sciences, Management Sciences, Behavioural Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Agriculture, Engineering and Health Sciences (except Islamic Studies, Pakistan Studies, Languages, and History). Meanwhile, the interested authors who meet the eligibility criteria may get their textbook published directly from any one of the following publishers: Taylor & Francis, McGraw Hill, Pearson, and Oxford University Press. It is an open call so HEC will continue to receive the published textbooks with required documents from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023. - APP

Role of freelancing in the Pakistani economy
The freelancing industry in Pakistan is rapidly progressing

NIZAR ALI KHAN

A person who works for themselves by providing services to customers, typically more than one customer at a time, is known as a freelancer. Freelancing can be a quick and inexpensive method to start working for yourself as your own boss, and it often allows you to do so from the convenience of your own home. Freelance marketplaces provide individuals with new ways to generate income, and their numbers have the potential to increase dramatically in a short period of time. Freelancing employment is expanding at a consistent rate and is making success in traditional job markets because of the rapid transformation of people's lifestyles and the introduction of new technology advancements. According to the findings of a recent poll, it is anticipated that by the year 2020, one out of every three workers across the globe will be engaged in online freelancing. Many employees are putting their full-time careers at jeopardy in order to pursue opportunities for self-employment, which is evidence that we are living in a dangerous new world. Freelancing has grown into a significant industry and is continuing its rapid expansion at this moment. Freelancing is a significant

source of income for Pakistan, which places it among the top countries in this regard. Over the past ten years, Pakistan has seen substantial growth in its human capital, as seen by the fact that about 16 percent of people in the younger age bracket hold a college degree. The proliferation of online freelance marketplaces in Pakistan can be attributed to the country's rapidly expanding broadband connectivity. It is generally agreed upon that Pakistan and the Philippines are the two best countries in which to outsource one's work due to their rapid economic development, competitive prices, and positive responses from customers. According to a report, the outsourcing industry in the Philippines expanded by 789 percent in 2007 and 2008, while Pakistan ranked second on the list with 328 percent growth. The freelancing industry in Pakistan is rapidly progressing. From July through December of the fiscal year 2021-22, the national community of freelancers generated a total of \$216.788 million in revenue by exporting their services. This figure represents an increase of over 16.74 percent in comparison to the earnings for the same period of the previous year. In the fiscal year 2021, Pakistan's information technology exports experienced growth of 47.4 percent, surpassing the \$2 billion mark for the very first time in the history of the country. The total value of in-

formation technology exports increased to \$2.12 billion in the fiscal year 2020-21 from \$1.44 billion in the previous fiscal year. In the fiscal year 2021-22 budget, the federal government proposed a number of tax and regulatory reforms intended to boost the export of information technology. According to the findings of the study, the average age of freelancers is less than 35 years old, and 80.8% have finished some form of postsecondary education. When it comes to involvement, there is a sizable gender discrepancy among freelancers. It has been shown that 73.1% of freelancers are only working on a part-time basis, and that 33% of them wish to become IT business owners. There is no doubting that the government had excellent intentions to aid the business by constructing high-tech zones and providing tax holidays for corporations; yet, the authorities have failed to make much progress toward their goals. Waiting around for the advantages to trickle down has never been an effective strategy. The following are some things that the government of Pakistan needs to think about if they want to achieve their goal of inclusive, sustainable, and youth-led economic growth. To begin, the government of Pakistan needs to take the necessary steps to remove any and all obstacles preventing PayPal from doing business in the country. The pro-

grammed is accessible in over 200 countries and can be paid for using any one of 25 different currencies. If Zimbabwe, Rwanda and Uganda can manage to get PayPal, Pakistan has no excuse. Second, while it is naive to ask for tax exemptions, the government should recognize and incentivize individual freelancers (not just corporations) by providing a softer tax scheme to compensate for the anti-tech culture in the country. This should be done in order to make up for the fact that the culture in the country is anti-tech. No new levy on the industry should be considered until PayPal is made operational and household gadget ownership increases to at least 50 percent. Until then, PayPal should not be used. If the wealthy in the country are eligible for tax breaks to the tune of a staggering 1.3 trillion rupees per year, then the government of the country should be able to provide for its educated young people. It is important to note that in order to encourage the growth of the freelancing industry, Bangladesh has previously exempted freelance work from taxation. Thirdly, the government should concentrate on reducing the amount of money it spends on brick-and-mortar projects, which result in the formation of silos, and increasing the amount of money it invests in the "software" of the economy, which includes retaining the most talented and intelligent workers and putting them to work teaching others.

Mufti meets
Saudi envoy;
urges to
provide
details of
Hajj expense

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Mufti Abdul Shakoor on Wednesday visited the Saudi embassy and discussed issues of mutual interests with Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki. Accompanying with Religious Affairs Additional Secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani, he asked the Saudi envoy to provide the details of mandatory Hajj expenses as soon as possible so that Hajj arrangements could be finalized. The minister requested to include Lahore and Karachi in the 'Road to Makkah' project and to increase the upper age limit for Hajj pilgrims to 75 years in view of the specific cultural and economic conditions of Pakistan.

On the occasion, the Saudi Ambassador assured to convey the message to the top Saudi officials immediately and every possible facility will be provided to the Pakistani pilgrims. - APP

Pakistan
Saudi enjoy
brotherly ties

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki called on Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi here on Thursday. During the meeting, the Minister said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed brotherly ties based on faith, culture, and strategic partnership, said a press release issued here. Federal Minister discussed issues and opportunities for creating jobs for Overseas Pakistanis in Saudi Arabia. Federal Minister emphasized ensuring the Pakistani quota in the workforce for the development of the futuristic Neom City Project in Saudi Arabia. As we are a developing country so the criteria for Pakistanis should be more open and get at able toward skilled and unskilled labour to accommodate more and more Pakistanis in diverse jobs in the multi-billion project. He said that the leadership of both brotherly countries were determined to further enhance the bilateral ties and cooperation in diverse fields. Sajid Hussain Turi observed that both countries had supported each other in every hard situation. He also lauded the Saudi government's cooperation in the progress and prosperity of Pakistan. - APP

The talks begin

No better reminder of the stakes involved than the fact that the rupee was touching 200 to the dollar in the open market just as Pakistan-IMF talks were beginning in Doha. The capital markets have so far delivered a resounding vote of no-confidence in this government's ability to steer the economy out of the immediate balance of payments crisis with equities and the currency tanking and bond yields rising multiple percentage points above the benchmark interest rate. And after a week of one record low after another for the rupee, it seems the only way to put some sort of floor under it is to revive the Extended Fund Facility (EFF).

But that would've been much easier if PM Shahbaz Sharif hadn't overruled the finance ministry by keeping oil prices capped for at least another fortnight. The stock market would have celebrated, the rupee would've pared some of its losses, and international financial markets would have already begun pricing in a positive outcome of the talks. Now, though, the anxiety and confusion are lingering just because the PML-N led government does not have the political strength to upset the masses by taking a hugely unpopular but extremely necessary decision. For some reason, though, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail, who had very recently called to remove the controversial subsidies, went into the meeting with optimism about finding some sort of "middle ground" with the Fund. While nothing could be better, this does give the impression that he wasn't paying much attention when the previous administration tried and failed to do just such things; and everybody suffered as a result. It's crystal clear, for all intents and purposes, that the IMF is not going to accept any subsidies that burden reserves beyond a certain point. It's also pretty clear that nobody else will lend to us either if the IMF will not. Therefore, it couldn't be any clearer that we need to bite the bullet and raise petrol and electricity prices right now. By refusing to accept this reality, the government will have only itself to blame when it ultimately caves in and gets battered in the war of narratives.

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Press freedom under attack

Last week's shooting of Al Jazeera's Shireen Abu Aqleh – one of the Arab world's best-known journalists – is not only a sad and devastating blow to friends and admirers, but a deadly reminder that press freedoms in the Holy Land are under attack. Abu Aqleh was among a group of journalists covering a raid by the Israel Defense Forces in the West Bank city of Jenin on Wednesday when, according to the reporters present, soldiers shot her in the head. She and her producer (who was shot in the back) were wearing vests marked with the word "press". Her Qatar-based employer accused Israeli soldiers of shooting Abu Aqleh "in cold blood".

Israel's response was a familiar one: claim the shooter was a Palestinian. This approach was largely abandoned when the army's evidence was debunked. Israel now says its troops may have "accidentally" shot her. But public arguments over ballistics suggest Israel thinks guilt must be proved beyond reasonable doubt – or blame for the killing cannot be assigned.

The argument, however, is not being played out in a court of law but in the court of public opinion. The EU and the US – Abu Aqleh was an American citizen – called for a probe. Disgracefully, the UK foreign secretary, Liz Truss, did not. There should be an investigation. Whoever shot Abu Aqleh ought to be held accountable. But the Israeli army investigating itself will not have the trust of Palestinians, or the wider world. At least 47 journalists have been killed by Israeli forces since 2000. Palestinians are particularly vulnerable, too often treated not as impartial observers but as partisans – rarely receiving official accreditation, having their movements restricted and being assaulted with impunity.

No one has been held to account in Israel for media deaths. The Palestinian president, Mahmud Abbas, wants to go to the international criminal court over Abu Aqleh's death. Prior to her killing, the International Federation of Journalists had already submitted claims to the court that Israel's targeting of the media amounted to war crimes. Last May, Israel bombed the Gaza City media building – home to Palestinian networks and the Associated Press – claiming (without offering evidence) that it was being used by Hamas.

The Israel-Palestine conflict is simmering and threatens to boil over. Since the current Israeli government took office last June, Israeli forces have killed 76 Palestinians, including at least 13 children, in the occupied territories. It is a concern when international law is disregarded in Israel. Mass expulsion and the demolition of Palestinian villages have been greenlit. Illegal settlements on occupied land are being expanded. Israel is seeing its worst wave of terror attacks in years; a spate of knife, gun and axe assaults have left 18 Israelis dead.



Sino-Pakistan relations' new dimensions

Ali Nawaz Gilani



China is the largest investor in Pakistan's Gwadar Deep Sea Port, located at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz. Both the United States and India see it as a potential launch pad for the Chinese navy, enabling...

On the occasion of the 71st anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China both the nations deserve congratulations. These two brotherly countries have stood by each other at all times. In particular China has not only been heavily involved in Pakistan's reconstruction projects but also its engineers and workers have sacrificed their lives, for that act of bravery the Pakistani nation is grateful to the people's of China. The ideal friendship between China and Pakistan is a threat to their enemies. These forces keep trying to weaken the relations between Pakistan and China by that way but which is not possible because China and Pakistan have proved in every age of difficulty that their friendship is as strong as china wall. Recently Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif telephoned Chinese Minister Li Keqiang. China also expressed its deep regret over the attack on the Confucius Center and vowed that the friendship would be further strengthened in the future.

In a phone call on May 16, Premier Li said that China and Pakistan are friendly neighbors and steel friends. China always prioritizes its relations with Pakistan in its diplomacy with neighboring countries. According to Prime Minister Li, China is ready to strengthen strategic ties with Pakistan, promote cooperation on major projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and strengthen bilateral staff exchanges to prevent the Corona epidemic. Prime Min-

ister Li pointed out that the recent attack on Chinese nationals in Karachi has shocked and angered the Chinese people and strongly condemned this terrorist attack. Prime Minister Li expressed hope that Pakistan would bring the perpetrators to justice as soon as possible, make every effort to handle the prosecution, reassure the bereaved families and the injured and help Chinese institutions and citizens in Pakistan.

Prime Minister Sharif also expressed deep sorrow over the deaths and injuries of Chinese nationals in the Karachi terrorist attack and said that he would strengthen security measures for all Chinese institutions and citizens in Pakistan to prevent such incidents from happening again. It is true that the friendship between China and Pakistan is not such that a few incidents can weaken it because it has a history of its own. Formal relations were established in 1951 when Pakistan became one of the first countries to end official diplomatic relations with the Dominion of the Republic of China (Taiwan) and recognize the rule of the People's Republic of China over mainland China. Bilateral relations have grown from the initial Chinese policy of neutrality to a partnership with Pakistan. Their Diplomatic relations were established in 1950, border issues were resolved in 1963, military aid began in 1966, a strategic alliance was formed in 1972, and economic cooperation began in 1979. China has become the third largest supplier of arms to Pakistan and the third largest trading partner. Maintaining close ties with China is a central part of Pakistan's foreign policy. Pakistan has played a key role in bridging the communication gap between the People's Republic of China and the West by facilitating the historic visit of US President Richard Nixon to China in 1972. It is said that Relations between Pakistan and China have been described as higher than mountains, deeper than seas, stronger than steel, dearer than the light of eyes, sweeter than honey. In terms of Pakistan's recent support for China, in July 2019, Pakistan was one of the 50 countries in Xinjiang that supported China's policies, signing a joint letter to the UNHRC on China's human rights record. Appreciating the remarkable

achievements, claimed that security and safety had now returned to Xinjiang and that the human rights of people of all ethnic groups were being protected and that the propaganda against it was false.

In addition, in November 2019, Pakistan was one of the 54 countries that signed the Joint Declaration in support of China's Xinjiang policies. Supported the National Security Act. Political relations as well as strong military ties between China and Pakistan. This alliance between the two neighboring East Asian countries is geographically important. Strong military ties were also aimed primarily at countering regional Indian and American influence. In recent years, the relationship has been strengthened by ongoing military plans and agreements between Pakistan and China. It accounts for about 47% of arms exports. Since 1962, China has been a reliable source of military equipment for the Pakistani military. The training aircraft includes tailor-made training aircraft for Pakistan Air force. China has designed state-of-the-art tailor-made weapons for Pakistan, making it a strong military power in the South Asian region.

China is the largest investor in Pakistan's Gwadar Deep Sea Port, located at the mouth of the Strait of Hormuz. Both the United States and India see it as a potential launch pad for the Chinese navy, enabling them to launch submarines and warships in the Indian Ocean. China has recently pledged about 43 billion dollars in investment. In 2008, Pakistan purchased military equipment from China for better quality of defense weapons and forces to counter the relentless onslaught of foreign militants. In the past China has played a key role in developing Pakistan's nuclear infrastructure, especially as increasingly strict export controls in the West make it difficult for Pakistan to obtain plutonium and uranium enrichment equipment elsewhere. The Chinese help build the Khushab reactor which plays a key role in plutonium production in Pakistan. China has also provided technical and material support for the completion of the Chashma nuclear power complex and plutonium reprocessing facility, which was built in the mid-1990s.

On January 26, 2015, at the end of Raheel Sharif's two-day visit to Beijing, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi described Pakistan as China's "irreplaceable, all-weather friend." Sharif also met with Yu Zhengsheng, Meng Jianzhu and Xu Qiliang. On April 19, 2015, China concluded the sale of eight conventional submarines worth 5 billion, the largest arms sales by China in its history. The two countries are cooperating in coun-

ter-terrorism. China, Pakistan and Afghanistan have cooperated to enhance regional stability. Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said that China wants to use Xinjiang as a base for economic development in the region.

Pakistan has been one of China's major trading partners. Bilateral trade volume exceeded US 20 billion for the first time in calendar year 2017, according to China Customs. In 2017, China's exports to Pakistan increased by 5.9% to 18.25 billion. Economic trade between Pakistan and China has recently increased and a free trade agreement has signed. Economic relations between the two countries continue to dominate by military and technical transactions and China has promised to increase its investment in Pakistan's economy and infrastructure. On April 22, 2015, China released its first foreign investment plan under the Belt and Road Initiative for the development of a hydropower station near Jhelum, according to China Daily. When it comes to economic cooperation, the mother of all these projects is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, the biggest project of the century and the major project of which is Gwadar Port.

CPEC will connect Pakistan with China and Central Asian countries through the highway connecting Kashgar to Khanjarab and Gwadar. The port of Gwadar in southern Pakistan will serve as a trade nerve hub for China as most of its trade will conduct exclusively through the oil port. Shanghai is the only commercial port in the country that is more than 16,000 kilometers away. The voyage takes two to three months during which time ships are exposed to pirates, bad weather, political rivals and other threats. Instead using the Gwadar port will reduce the distance and potentially cost.

The plan seeks to increase market presence in Chinese businesses Haier in home appliances, China Mobile in telecommunications and Huawei, and in the mining and minerals market already established by China Metallurgical Group Corporation (MCC). It would not be an overstatement to say that the future of China and Pakistan is link to the CPEC and Belt and Route Initiative project. The CPEC will raise the flag of success all over the world and the economic condition of the people of Pakistan will also be improve with the proud China with zero poverty.

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Israeli apartheid set to become even more extreme

Ray Hanania



When Israelis murder Palestinians, very few are charged with a crime and even fewer are convicted. And even when they are punished, they are usually given extremely lenient sentences. The Israeli government never destroys the homes of Jewish killers or expels their families

Violence by Palestinians against Israelis has been on the rise recently, creating a crisis in the Tel Aviv government, which usually means even harsher measures and stepped-up rhetoric about "anti-Semitism." The conflict between Israel and the Palestin-

ism." Jewish Israelis are allowed to be angry, but Christian or Muslim Palestinians are not. Another factor that Israel uses to intentionally blur the truth about its violence is the government's censorship of journalists – when they are not killing them, of course. In Israel, the news

media is bullied into only reporting what the government approves. The mainstream Western media plays along with this censorship, even hiring Jewish journalists to one-sidedly cover the violence in order to remain in the country. Arab journalists in particular have restrictions on where they can and cannot go to report. This is a tactic the Israelis learned from the apartheid government run by South Africa's National Party.

When Shireen Abu Aqleh, a Christian Palestinian journalist, was killed last week, the Israelis immediately took advantage of their censorship and control of the media to assert that she was hit by Palestinian gunfire during a provocative Israeli forces raid into Jenin refugee camp, allegedly to track down "terrorists." However, Palestinian witnesses claimed the fire was directed at them by Israeli soldiers. And Israel's strategy fell flat when it was revealed that Abu Aqleh died nowhere near any Palestinian gunfire. When Israelis murder Palestinians, very few are charged with a crime and even fewer are convicted. And even when they are punished, they are usually given extremely lenient sentences. The Israeli government never destroys the homes of Jewish killers or expels their families. Now, Bennett is taking Israel's outrageous apartheid policies to an even greater extreme by announcing he is considering not only evicting the families of Palestinians accused of terrorism who live in the West Bank, but also deporting them to the Gaza

Strip, the open-air prison that Tel Aviv controls the same way the Soviet Union once controlled the countries behind the Iron Curtain. Bennett also wants to demolish the family homes of Palestinian citizens of Israel if they are suspected of terrorism, as not being tough enough on Christian and Muslim Palestinian rights could undermine his coalition government.

The Israelis are in a frenzy to respond to the increased violence when the victims are Jews. But they do not seem to worry that the vast majority of fatalities are actually non-Jews, almost all killed by Israeli soldiers or armed settler fanatics. The Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor, which tracks violence in the conflict, last month reported that Israel had killed five times as many Palestinians so far in 2022 as it did in the same period last year. Even though Israel has seen a rise in violence, with 19 Israelis killed this year, it is still below the 47 Palestinians killed by Israel as of last month – a number the Israeli and pro-Israel Western media marginalizes. The killing of a Palestinian is considered minor news by most media outlets, but the killing of an Israeli Jew is an anti-Semitic crisis. No matter how many Palestinians Israel kills or deports after destroying their family homes and giving the land to racist Israeli settlers, the Palestinians will only become more resolute in seeking to hold Israel accountable.

Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

SC bars any transfers...

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The court further maintained that DG FIA San-ullah Abbasi and director Rizwan were also replaced. Referring to Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz's case, CJP Bandial mentioned that the DG FIA barred one of the investigation officers to appear before the court. "Nobody should interfere during the investigation and prosecution branch," the chief justice told the attorney-general. The hearing for the case has been adjourned till next Friday (May 27). A day earlier, CJP Ata Bandial took the notice of perceived interference in the "independence of the prosecution branch in the performance of its powers and duties for the investigation and prosecution of pending criminal matters involving persons in authority in the government". The chief justice took notice of the perceived interference on the recommendations of a judge belonging to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, the statement issued by the apex court said.

ECP to announce...

FROM PAGE 01
Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi had sent a reference to the ECP against 25 PTI dissidents who had reportedly voted against the party policy in the election for the Punjab chief minister on April 16. Earlier, lawyers of all the parties had presented arguments before the ECP. After listening to their arguments, the ECP bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, had reserved the verdict. The Commission, in its May 11 verdict, had rejected the disqualification reference against the MNAs of the PTI involved in floor-crossing during the no-confidence motion against PTI Chairman Imran Khan. The ECP said in its verdict that the reference against defecting MNAs of the PTI was "not in line with the Constitution".

Maryam says early...

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"Tell me, if Nawaz Sharif, for your sake, leaves the government, would you give him two-third majority to put the country the correct court?" Maryam Nawaz began by saying that the people of Pakistan were demanding the return of Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan to solve their problem. She said that Nawaz Sharif restored peace in Pakistan by working jointly with the security agencies of the country and ended load-shedding. She said that Imran Khan destroyed the economy in his three and a half years of government. Maryam Nawaz accused Imran Khan of concocting lies about 'foreign conspiracy' and reminded him that he had failed to produce evidence about his '35 punctures drama' - a reference to Imran Khan's claim about poll rigging in 35 constituencies in the 2013 elections. She claimed that Imran Khan's statement about threats to his life was also a lie. The PML-N leader called Imran Khan a liar and made her support chant 'liar, liar'. She said Imran Khan was hurling epithets against the judiciary until Wednesday afternoon when the Supreme Court conducted proceedings on the suo moto notice (of government interference in the prosecution of high profile cases involving persons of authority). Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that if the top court had taken suo moto notice "against Shehbaz Sharif," it should also take suo moto notice on the serious allegations levelled by former FIA director-general Bashir Memon against Imran Khan. She said that Imran Khan used inappropriate language against and attacked state institutions, judiciary, and media. Maryam also called out President Alvi's son for using strong language against institution.

Pak eyeing podium finish at Asia Hockey Cup to secure WC berth

The 11th edition of the eight-team continental hockey competition is set to be staged at Gelora Bung Karno Sports Complex, Gelora, Central Jakarta from May 23 to June 01

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National hockey team manager Olympian Khawaja Muhammad Junaid has said that qualifying for the next year's World Cup would be the key objective for his side at the Asia Cup. "The top three teams will secure berths in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup in India in 2023. Hence, we are focused only at a podium finish at the event," Junaid told APP on phone before flying to Indonesia along with the Pakistan team on Wednesday night. The 11th edition of the eight-team continental hockey competition is set to be staged at Gelora Bung Karno Sports Complex, Gelora, Central Jakarta from May 23 to June 1. Pakistan, who reached at the event site three days ahead of the tournament on Thursday, will face arch-rivals India in their opening match. Pakistan have been placed in Pool A, along with India, Japan, and the hosts Indonesia. Pool B includes South Korea, Malaysia, Bangladesh and Oman. "We are in a comparatively tough pool. Our first fixture is against India, who've played around 100



international matches during the past three years, while during the same period we've just played seven to eight matches against the world's best sides, including the recently-held five-match Europe series." "But we've been working really hard for the last four months. I think our team is in good shape and ready to perform at the big stage," he added. He said during the Europe tour Pakistan Hockey Federation gave a chance to young guns and the ex-

perience had been very good. "Our seven players made an international debut during the Europe tour. These young guns lived up to the expectations. They along with senior players performed well and proved that they were capable of beating any side in the world. Six of them [young players] are part of our 20-member contingent for Asia Cup. "Our players have the pace, temperament and the passion to win. They also possess good skills. But they need to learn consis-

cy. They'll have to guard against a pompous mentality otherwise there may be a win on the first day and loss on the second day as happened during the Europe tour." According to Junaid, all in all the Europe tour had been very helpful as it helped in identifying team's strong as well as weak areas. "At the camp in Lahore [after the Europe tour], head coach Sigfried Aikman has done his best to help the team plug in loopholes in the grey areas. He is also well aware of

the techniques of Indian and Japanese teams and has devised the strategy accordingly to face them in the Asia Cup." He said modern hockey had become very fast and the players had been asked to play aggressively right from the beginning. "The players are excited to deliver. The Asia Cup will also help us see the level where they are at the moment. We are keen to see whether they can execute the style of play that we've envisioned for them or not," he added.

'Historic night' as Frankfurt win Europa



DNA

SEVILLE: Eintracht Frankfurt defeated Rangers 5-4 on penalties to win the Europa League on Wednesday after the final in Seville finished 1-1 at the end of extra time. Aaron Ramsey missed for Rangers in the shoot-out after coming on as a substitute with only three minutes left of extra time, before Rafael Borre struck the winning shot to complete Frankfurt's remarkable triumph. "We will celebrate for the next few days now," said Frankfurt coach Oliver Glasner. Borre was the

hero of the night, after already cancelling out Joe Aribo's opener for Rangers as Frankfurt won their first European trophy since 1980 and booked their place in next season's Champions League group stage. "I dreamed of tonight, of a historic night for the club, a historic night for me," said Borre, the Colombian. "It's my first European title. I will keep this memory forever." "We are all heroes. Without the fans we wouldn't have made it," said Frankfurt goalkeeper Kevin Trapp. Both clubs were looking to win a second European title in

their history, Rangers after clinching the Cup Winners' Cup in 1972 and Frankfurt after they lifted the UEFA Cup 42 years ago. But the Rangers came up just short at the end of an incredible run to the final. Only 10 years ago this week, Rangers fell into administration before being liquidated and relegated to Scotland's bottom tier. Frankfurt had already beaten Real Betis, Barcelona and West Ham United en route to the final and they were probably deserving winners, shading a compelling contest that always seemed to lack real technical quality.

With a capacity of just under 43,000, Sevilla's Ramon Sanchez Pizjuan ground was never going to be big enough to house all the travelling fans, with Rangers bringing over an estimated 100,000 while around 60,000 followed Frankfurt to Spain. The vast majority enjoyed the day in good spirits but security concerns were not unfounded, with skirmishes breaking out in the city centre during the day on Wednesday while five German fans were arrested late Tuesday after police said 200 Frankfurt fans launched an attack on Rangers supporters.

CAS Khyber Cup National Ranking Tennis Tournament from Friday

ISLAMABAD: The 39th CAS Khyber Cup National Ranking Tennis Tournament 2022 will commence at Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Complex, Islamabad on Friday. "Top players of the country Aqeel Khan, Muhammad Shoab, Muzammil Murtaza, Muhammad Abid, Yousaf Khalil, Shahzad Khan, Barkatullah, HeeraAshiq and Mudassir Murtaza have confirmed their participation in the event," a spokesman of PTF said on Thursday. He said a total number of 125 players would be seen in action in five different categories of men's singles, men's doubles, boys 18 & under dingles, boys & girls 12 & under dingles and 45+ foubles. "The event carries a prize purse of Rs 7,000,000, which will be distributed amongst the participants in addition to TA/DA to the juniors admissible under the PTF rules," he added. The federation will also provide free of cost accommodation to the outstation players at the PTF Complex. The matches will start in two sessions because of the hot weather. The first session will be from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, while the 2nd session will be from 4:00 pm onward. Meanwhile, President PTF Salim Saifullah Khan in statement said that the Khyber Cup was one of the prestigious event on the PTF calendar. - APP

Form, fitness pose questions for Osaka

DNA

PARIS: Naomi Osaka returns to Roland Garros looking to banish the memories of her withdrawal 12 months ago, but hampered by concerns over her clay-court form and fitness. The former world number one pulled out of last year's French Open ahead of the second round, citing mental health issues. She had been threatened with expulsion and fined by organisers over her refusal to attend press conferences. Osaka then spent large parts of the remainder of the 2021 season off the court and has struggled this campaign with injury. The Japanese star withdrew from last week's Italian Open to rest an Achilles problem and try to regain full fitness for the Grand Slam tournament in Paris, where she will be unseeded at a major for the first time since the 2018 Australian Open. The 24-year-old has slipped to 38th in the WTA rankings going into Sunday's start of the French Open but was as low as number 78 in March. Osaka showed she could still compete for the biggest titles the following week, reaching

Navjot Sidhu jailed for road rage death

NEW DELHI: India's top court has sentenced cricketer-turned-politician Navjot Singh Sidhu to one year in prison in a decades-old road rage case. The Supreme Court ruled that Sidhu "intentionally caused hurt" to Gurnam Singh, who was 65, resulting in his death in the incident in 1988. The former MP was acquitted of the more serious charge of manslaughter in 2018 - that still stands. But the jail sentence is a serious setback for his political career. Sidhu recently resigned as the Congress party's chief in Punjab after his party was wiped out in state assembly elections. He has limited legal options left as he can appeal against the ruling only once in the form of a curative petition. Sidhu was first accused of manslaughter in 1988 when a 65-year-old man died hours after an argument with him in Patiala. He was India's opening batsman at the time and a rising star in his fledgling international cricket career. The case continued to be heard in a trial court. In 1999, the court acquitted Sidhu. The state appealed against the acquittal in the high court, which convicted him for manslaughter in 2006. This forced him to resign from his parliamentary seat of Amritsar as Indian laws do not allow convicted individuals to be public representatives. He appealed against the verdict in the Supreme Court which stayed the conviction, allowing him to retake his seat in a by-election. In 2018, the top court acquitted him in the manslaughter case, but found him guilty of "hurting the victim" and asked him to pay a fine of 1,000 rupees (\$13; £10). - DNA



the Miami Open final - her first on the WTA Tour since the 2021 Australian Open - before losing to world number one Iga Swiatek. "Only a couple days ago I was celebrating getting back into the top 50 but I don't take things like that for granted," the four-time Grand Slam champion said after that defeat. "I'm a bit more humble now about the opportunities I get. I can take a lot of positives from this." Osaka will fancy her chances of a deep run at Roland Garros for the first time in a wide-open women's draw, with the exception of red-hot favourite Swiatek who is on a 28-match winning streak. But she has plenty still to prove on clay, having never reached a Tour final on the surface or even made the second week of the French Open.



Indian court convicts Yasin Malik of 'terrorism'

NEW DELHI: An Indian court on Thursday convicted top Kashmiri leader Mohammed Yasin Malik in a terrorism-related case that carries a maximum sentence of the death penalty or life imprisonment. Malik had been charged with 'terrorist acts', illegally raising funds, being a member of a 'terrorist' organisation and criminal conspiracy and sedition. Judge Praveen Singh set May 25 for hearing arguments from both sides on sentencing, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. The judge also directed Malik to provide an affidavit regarding his financial assets. During the trial, Malik protested the charges and said he was a freedom fighter. "Terrorism-related charges levelled against me are concocted, fabricated and politically motivated," his organisation, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, cited him as telling the court. "If seeking azadi (freedom) is a crime, then I am ready to accept this crime and its consequences," he told the judge. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front was one of the first armed freedom fighting groups to come into existence in Indian-occupied Kashmir (IoK). It supported an independent and united Kashmir. Led by Malik, the group gave up armed resistance in 1994. A resistance movement broke out in IoK in 1989 with fighters demanding an independent Kashmir or its merger with Pakistan. India accuses Pakistan of arming and training rebel groups to fight Indian forces, an allegation Pakistan vehemently opposes and denies. Islamabad says it provides only moral and diplomatic support to insurgents. - DNA

Government imposes ban on non-essential...

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The ban will have an impact of \$6 billion," the information minister said during a press conference. Aurangzeb added the government's focus was to reduce imports and, therefore, it was about to introduce an export-oriented policy, which would benefit the local industry and producers.

The information minister said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was working "day and night to stabilise the economy" and had decided to ban the imports of all items that were not in the use of common people. Aurangzeb added the imports covered food items, decoration items, and luxury vehicles, as she noted that the country was facing a "tough economic situation due to the previous government's policies". The information minister said the announcement was part of the fiscal plan devised by the current government to overcome the PTI's "incompetent" policies. "Berating the PTI for calling out the incumbent government on the economic turmoil, Aurangzeb said the Imran Khan-led government hiked inflation, took historic loans, committed "economic terrorism", and played with the country's economy by subsidising petroleum prices. The information minister noted that the PTI government went against the agreement it had made with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by subsidising the price of petroleum products. "Now, we cannot come out of the conditions put forth by the IMF for Pakistan. But despite that, instead of shifting the burden of conspirators on Pakistanis, the PML-N and its allies do not plan on doing this as it has never been their manifesto," Aurangzeb said. The information minister said during the previous government did not have an economic plan. "[Ex-prime minister] Imran Khan would often say that he wasn't in power to know about the rates of tomatoes." "They [PTI] first exported sugar, then imported it and sold it at Rs120, whereas, during the PML-N's tenure, it stood Rs62 per kg. And during their tenure, women stood for a kilo of sugar in long queues. Don't they have any same? Do they think that the people of Pakistan have forgotten all this?" Responding to the PTI and Imran Khan's repeated demands of snap polls, Aurangzeb said it is the government's job to conduct elections across the country, whether the party "cries or shouts".

Pak wants Afghan govt to help curb terrorism

FROM PAGE 01

the minister stated that Pakistan was continuing to not only monitor the situation but work on its side to ensure that they could "try to tackle the threat of terrorism and hope that the regime in Afghanistan lives up to their international commitment to not allow their soil to be used for terrorism". Replying to a question regarding what it will take for Pakistan to accept the current administration in Kabul, the FM said that any decision in this would be taken in line with the discussions with the international community.

"We continue to advocate for engagement, particularly in light of the humanitarian crisis developing in Afghanistan", he further added. Bilawal, after a question regarding if Islamabad had engaged with the Afghan Taliban on how Muslim countries can give rights to women, claimed that the issue was not of the West. "I see women's rights or women's rights to education as rights granted to us in Islam. We'll be emphasising that the Taliban keep their international commitments and ensure rights to the women of Afghanistan," he said. After the interviewer's remark that the US believed Pakistan had played a "very dangerous role" in supporting the Afghan Taliban over the decades, the minister maintained that Pakistan had consistently engaged with Afghanistan regardless of who was in power.



ALMATY: On the first day of Made in Pakistan exhibition there was an opening ceremony attended by H.E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Sajjad Seehar the Ambassador of Pakistan to Kazakhstan and USAID representatives. - DNA

Briefs

Bush calls invasion of Iraq 'unjustified'



MONITORING DESK

WASHINGTON: In a gaffe, former US President George W. Bush called the invasion of Iraq "unjustified" before correcting himself to say he meant to refer to Russia's war on Ukraine, local media reported on Wednesday evening. "The result is an absence of checks and balances in Russia, and the decision of one man to launch a wholly unjustified and brutal invasion of Iraq," Bush said before correcting himself "I mean, of Ukraine." He was delivering a speech at an event in his presidential center at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, according to daily The Dallas Morning News. The 75-year-old former president blamed his age for the gaffe as the audience erupted in laughter following an initial awkward silence. Bush also compared Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Winston Churchill, Britain's premier during World War II, and condemned the Russian regime as autocratic. "The way countries conduct elections is indicative of how their leaders treat their own people, and how nations behave toward other nations," Bush said. "And nowhere is this on display more clearly than Ukraine," he said.

Germany arrests leading members of DHKPC

BERLIN: German police have arrested three senior members of the far-left terror group DHKPC, authorities said on Thursday. The terror group's alleged Germany chief Ozgul E., and two other leading figures, were arrested following a lengthy investigation, the Federal Prosecutor's Office said in a statement. Ozgul E., who is also on Turkey's list of most-wanted terrorists, was arrested on Monday in the southwestern city of Heidelberg, according to the prosecutors. She was suspected of organizing the terror group's propaganda, recruitment and funding activities across Germany, and is believed to have supplied fake passports to the members of the group. Serkan K., who had coordinated the terror group's activities in northern Germany, was arrested in Hamburg on Tuesday. Prosecutors said a third senior member of the group, Ihsan C., was arrested in the western city of Bochum on Wednesday. He was suspected of coordinating DHKPC's activities in southern Germany, organizing propaganda activities, and providing fake ID documents and logistical support for the terror group. Germany banned the DHKPC in 2000, but the group is still active in the country, and has around 650 followers among the immigrant population, according to the domestic intelligence agency BfV. - APP

IOF kidnaps two Palestinians from J'lem and W. Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) kidnapped on Thursday afternoon a Palestinian young man from Shuafat refugee camp, northeast of Jerusalem. According to local sources, Israeli plain-clothes officers kidnapped Khalil Jaber from the camp, with no known reason. In the West Bank, the IOF kidnapped on the same day a young man identified as Mohamed Za'oul after storming Husan town in Bethlehem. Meanwhile, the Ofer military court extended the detention of prisoner Ameen Abdul-Raouf, a resident of Rummanah village in Jenin, for the 12th consecutive time. - APP

USPICC, Greater NY Chamber to hold single country expo

DNA

The US-Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce (USPICC) and Greater New York Chamber have affirmed their existing partnership and agreed to hold a single country exhibition in New York on September 23. This was decided in a meeting between President of USPICC Sajjad Qamar, Zubair Tufail, President of the United Business Group (UBG) and former president of FPCCI, Secretary-General of USPICC Malik Sohail and President and CEO of the Greater New York Chamber of Commerce Mr Mark Jaffe. They agreed to work together to promote trade and commerce by exploring opportunities in both countries and to promote networking between both chambers so that their members can benefit from the experience of their partners. At the occasion, Sajjad Qamar said the United States has been one of the top investors in Pakistan with major investments concen-



trated in consumer goods, chemicals, energy, agriculture, business process outsourcing, transportation, and communications. Zubair Tufail said the United States is a very

important country; it is one of Pakistan's largest export destinations and we want to improve bilateral relations. We are seeking deeper commercial ties and want to work with the US to achieve further business enhancements, he added. Malik Sohail said the US has played a very important role in Pakistan's social and economic development, improved security, stability, prosperity, and self-reliance. Meanwhile, Sajjad Qamar said that USPICC has also decided to hold a three-day single country exhibition in the New York, United States from Sept 26 to Sept 28 to promote the economic interests of Pakistan. The expo will showcase Pakistani products including rice, agriculture products, textiles, chemicals, IT services etc. to attract buyers which will increase Pakistan's exports to the US. He said that a delegation from Pakistan comprising leading businessmen led by Muhammad Ahmed, President USPICC, Pakistan Chapter and will also take part in the expo.

Stakeholders not taken on board before raising duties: BMG

KARACHI: The leadership of Businessmen Group (BMG), while referring to FBR's recommendations to impose ban on luxury items and raising duties on many imported items including cars, household items, mobile phones, machineries, tiles, ceramics and many other items, stated that although the decision to raise duties has been taken to discourage imports in order to deal with swelling current account deficit but unfortunately, the stakeholders have once again not been taken on board which was likely to trigger a lot of confusion. After holding a meeting to discuss the economic issues being faced by the country, Chairman BMG Zubair Motiwala, Vice Chairmen BMG Tahir Khalique, Haroon Farooki, Anjum Nisar, Jawed Bilwani, and General Secretary BMG AQ Khalil, in a joint statement, said that the business and industrial community fears that FBR might have also increased duties on those items as well which were either not being manufactured locally or being produced in lesser quantities as compared to demand. This would create shortage of all such items and as the duties have been raised exorbitantly, the prices of all such items would go up beyond the approach of common man. It is also imperative that competition in terms of quality against the imported goods is also maintained. "We hope that FBR has not recommended any increase in duties on imported raw materials for industrial purposes which, if raised, would terribly affect the industrial performance and the economy will be plunged into further crises", they said, adding that the imports of raw materials for industrial consumption must continue without any hindrance with a view to ensure increased production, high exports and import-substitution. They also expressed deep concerns over persistent devaluation of Pakistani rupee against dollar which has escalated to all time high of Rs200, rising inflation, heavy subsidy being provided to minimize the impact of rising international petroleum prices and other poorly performing economic indicators which would be disastrous if not promptly and prudently handled. It was high time that the government has to take difficult decisions while the political crises must also be tackled on war footing basis as these were one of the major reasons for terribly shaking the confidence local and foreign investors. They urged the government, all political parties and other institutions that as Pakistan was going through a very critical phase, they all must forget their political differences for the time being and prioritize the economic and financial crises being suffered by the country and take actions in the larger interest of the country on top priority. - APP

Strong Pakistan China vocational training co-op needed

ISLAMABAD: "There is a strong need from both Pakistan and China to cooperate in vocational education. Much progress has been made, and it's just the start", said Syed Javed Hassan, Chairman National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTC). He told China Economic Net (CEN) in an interview that China has provided hundreds of Pakistani schools with vocational training and technical equipment that was worth about 500 million rupees. About 200 Pakistanis have been sent on scholarship to get short-term training in Chinese vocational institutions. "Dialogues are ongoing regarding how to further enhance the cooperation", he added. According to Syed Javed Hassan, there is a lot that can be done in Pakistan in vocational training. First is capacity building. "The total amount of capacity of formal vocational training is about 400,000, but what we need is probably as much as 2 million". Just as important is the training of trainers. "It is not simply a question of having classrooms and equipment, but it is also very important to have the right kind of trainers", Syed Hassan told CEN that communication is underway as to what training of trainers can take place both by bringing Chinese trainers to Pakistan and by sending trainers to China to get trained there. Then there is also a ques-

tion of course certification. "We would like to see some joint programs between the two countries so that for example, if Chinese employers come to Pakistan, they should be able to immediately employ those with mutually recognized certification and vice versa", Syed Hassan opined. "More institutes, training equipment of higher quality, better trainers, the curriculum in line with international standards and market demand, this is where Pakistan's vocational education is going", he added. Educational institutions on both sides are responding to this huge demand. "This year, we will see co-operation established with about ten institutes in Pakistan", Mr. Ma Xiaoyan from Tang International Education Group told CEN. The group, which launched the China-Pakistan modern dual-degree joint talent training program at the end of last year, selected 210 majors out of over 700 vocational majors in China to be introduced to Pakistan. In the third year of the program, students shall have a chance to study in China for Sino-Pak Dual Diploma. "About twenty Pakistani students come here to study each year", introduced Mr. Wen Yongming, Vice President of Baile Vocational College, one of the partners of Tang International Education Group. - APP



BAKU: Parliamentary delegation from Pakistan visited the Pakistan embassy Baku. The delegation was visiting Baku to participate in the 3rd General Conference of PAECO. - DNA

Chinese language learner plays key role working in KKH

DNA

BEIJING: A Mandarin learner's over one decade journey along KKH speaks high of his work as CPEC Pioneer, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Thursday. Chinese language has grabbed attention globally with the boom in Chinese economic growth in recent years. Since China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was launched in 2015, a growing number of Chinese language learners have emerged in Pakistan too. Yousuf Karim, office assistant at Karakoram Highway (KKH) Phase-II Havelian-Thakot, winning the award of "Outstanding Pakistani Staff of CPEC 2021" by the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan, may be one of the few Chinese learning 'pioneers' who started to intertwine with the language as early as nearly twenty years ago. "I obtained a diploma in Mandarin from National University of Modern Languages in 2007. I was amongst the first few students who opted to learn the Chinese language. CPEC has brought huge employment opportunities to the locals. It offered direct jobs for me on completion of the diploma,"

Yousuf told Gwadar Pro. Yousuf began to work as a Chinese language translator in 2008. In 2010, he joined China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) as an interpreter on KKH Phase-I project in 2010, and subsequently transferred to KKH Phase-II project in 2016. The Karakoram Highway, spanning an 887-kilometer-long distance between the China-Pakistan border and Hasan Abdal, is a symbol of China-Pakistan friendship in both peoples' eyes. The upgradation of the Khunjerab-Raikot section of KKH under Phase-I formed an important part of CPEC, and the remaining portion from Raikot to Islamabad divided into three sub-sections i.e. Raikot-Thakot, Thakot-Havelian and Havelian-Islamabad are being upgraded. So far, the Havelian-Thakot section with a length of 120 KM is already completed by CRBC under Phase-II. "The upgradation of KKH will promote tourism in the picturesque Gilgit-Baltistan as well as generate economic activities for the local people. The construction of road network at such a fast pace reflects the prudent policies of Pakistan, which not only improve north-south connectivity, but also provide all-weather linkage to neighboring China," Yousuf said. For over one decade, Yousuf shifted his duties in different areas/stations, ranging from Hunza to Havelian along the Karakoram Highway. "Being on this job for such a long time, personally I have not only improved the Chinese language, but also learned the administrative and official coordination and liaison process with government departments. I have two kids, both gaining quality education. I expect to further improve the standard of living of my family in the future," he said with confidence. Currently, although Yousuf's daily work is busy, he still tries to arrange time to learn Chinese. "I love Chinese. Chinese is quite difficult, however persistence and hard work have paid-off. Now daily communication at various levels within and outside the organization is much easier," he said. He also suggests Pakistani youth of profession degrees like engineering, medicine, accounting, etc. learning Chinese will enable them to be more effective in doing jobs on CPEC. In the future, Yousuf is willing to work for CPEC as always. "After completing this project, I aspire to continue my journey with this prestigious company as long as I have the opportunity to be part of CPEC," he concluded the interview.

German Intel Chief: Espionage at cold war levels

BERLIN: The head of Germany's domestic intelligence service said Thursday that levels of espionage are as high as during the Cold War, or even higher. Thomas Haldenwang, president of the BfV intelligence agency, also warned of the increased risk of sabotage against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. Germany has exposed a number of Russian spies operating in the country in recent years. "Today we assess the level of espionage against Germany at least at the level of the Cold War - if not significantly higher," Haldenwang said at an event in Berlin, according to The Associated Press. He predicted that "in a world of open hostilities and drastic sanctions, the inhibition threshold for espionage, sabotage and illegitimate influence will continue to fall." The BfV has stepped up its monitoring of activities by extremist groups and individuals seeking to question the state's legitimacy in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Haldenwang said the risk posed by such movements was heightened by foreign powers seeking to promote anti-government propaganda through disinformation. - Agencies

Spain, Portugal confirm 21 cases of monkeypox

OVIEDO: Spain confirmed seven cases of monkeypox and Portugal confirmed 14 cases on Wednesday night, as authorities continue to investigate at least 24 more suspected infections. All confirmed and suspected cases were found in men in the regions of Lisbon and Madrid. They all remain in stable condition, according to the health authorities. Earlier this month, the UK alerted about its first small outbreak of monkeypox. And for the first time on record, the virus is now spreading widely outside of Africa. Canada, Spain, Portugal and the US all reported their first cases on Wednesday. The virus is believed to be difficult to spread, but this novel pattern of transmission suggests more investigation is needed. In Spain, authorities are also providing contradictory messages. "Viral transmission for monkeypox is commonly through the respiratory system, but the characteristics of the 23 cases in Madrid suggest that it may be spread through mucosal contact during sexual relations," said Madrid health director Elena Andrades on Wednesday night. - APP

Telecom sector needs to upgrade its infrastructure

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque has said that the telecom sector needs to upgrade its infrastructure to improve the quality of services in Pakistan. He said that Ministry of IT is providing 90 to 95% subsidy for provision of mobile services and broadband in under-served and under-served areas, adding that telecom companies should now play their role in upgradation of their infrastructure in urban areas. The Federal Minister for IT was talking to Telenor delegation led by Jrgen C. Arentz Rostrop, EVP and Head of Asia at his office here on Thursday. The delegation included CEO Telenor Irfan Wahab Khan and CCAO Kamal Ahmed. Additional Secretary, MOITT Aisha Humera Moriani and Member Telecom Omar Malik were also present in the meeting. Syed Amin Ul Haque said that for the process of digitalization, it is essential to address public grievances and expand networking, while the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication is working expeditiously to remove all obstacles and enhance cooperation with the telecom sector for the fulfillment of Digital Pakistan Vision, this includes



high-level efforts to reduce taxes on the telecom sector and other issues related to SBP and RoW. The Federal Minister said: "Digital world needs innovation in all fields including e-commerce, daily routine; without it, no one can compete with the rapidly growing needs of the market." "As the record number of mobile phone and broadband subscribers grows in Pakistan,

so does the quality of services. similarly, the Digital World requires innovation in all areas, including e-commerce and day-to-day routines", he added. Jrgen C. Arentz Rostrop, EVP and Head of Asia and Telenor Group said that Telenor reiterated its commitment to being a key partner in Pakistan's digital journey. Jrgen Rostrop commented: "Telenor is committed to supporting Pakistan in its next stage of digital growth. To-

gether we must incorporate new technologies to bridge the digital and connectivity divide in the country. Not only does this ensure sustainable long-term growth, but a future-ready inclusive society that meets the digital needs of people and businesses." Telenor Pakistan CEO Irfan Wahab said that connectivity is the backbone of advancing society, and we are taking steps on a daily basis to improve the services.

Briefs

Abid Sher Ali says Nawaz Sharif to return soon

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Abid Sher Ali on Thursday confirmed the return of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan soon. Talking to newsmen after returning to Pakistan from London, the former federal minister alleged that efforts were being made to turn Pakistan into a Banana Republic State and the PML-N came forward for the rescue. Abid Sher Ali confirmed that Nawaz Sharif will also come to Pakistan soon. Recalling the conviction of former prime minister, Abid Sher Ali claimed that the PML-N supremo was given a sentence on fabricated proof. Nawaz Sharif is living in England's capital London for two years due to health reasons. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had directed the interior ministry on Tuesday to issue a diplomatic passport to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif. Shehbaz Sharif after assuming charge of his office got a briefing from the diplomatic staff about the issuance of a passport to the PML-N supremo. Pakistan's mission in London was directed to issue diplomatic passports to former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and former finance minister Ishaq Dar.

NAB announces major transfers, postings

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Thursday announced major reshuffle with posting and transfers. NAB Chairman Justice (R) Javed Iqbal gave the approval of the transfers and posting of 12 officers of regional offices of Lahore, Multan, Rawalpindi and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. According to a notification issued here on Thursday, the anti-graft watchdog has transferred 12 assistant directors of BPS-17. The anti-corruption department has transferred 7 assistant directors of Balochistan to different regions. Those who were transferred to Rawalpindi, Peshawar and Multan regions include, Ubaid, Mohsin Ali, Shah Pur Khan, Aftab Ahmed, Adnan Pervez Haider Qayyum, Sarfraz Nawaz and Ahsan Qadir. The Supreme Court of Pakistan has barred the government from the transfer of investigation officers in high-profile cases of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

10 days celebrations on Yaum-e-Takbeer

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Thursday while announcing the title of Yaum-e-Takbeer said, "We did not bow down, we will not bow down" said that it had been decided to observe 10 days celebrations for the historic achievement. In his statement, the minister said that the Prime Minister had directed that Yaum-e-Takbeer should be celebrated with national spirit in the style of Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan. The prime minister has directed the federal government, governments of four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan to jointly organize the celebrations, she said. The minister said that the celebrations for Yaum-e-Takbeer would begin on May 19. She said that May 28, 1998 was a day of great national pride and a day of national achievement proving Pakistan would never compromise on its independence, sovereignty and national interests. She said that under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Pakistan was made a nuclear power, now it would be made an economic power. - APP

Israel will not investigate Journalist's killing: Report

The Israeli military believes the investigation would lead to controversy in Israel; Abu Akleh family not surprised, calls for transparent probe

MONITORING DESK

TEL AVIV: The Israeli military is not planning to investigate the killing of Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, according to Israeli media, leading her family to reiterate their call for a transparent probe into her shooting. Israel's Military Police Criminal Investigation Division believes an investigation that treats Israeli soldiers as suspects will lead to opposition within Israeli society, the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reported on Thursday. The Jerusalem Post also confirmed the report. Abu Akleh, 51, was killed by an Israeli soldier last Wednesday, according to witnesses and colleagues who were present when she was shot while covering an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank city of

Jenin. In response to the report, Abu Akleh's family said they were not surprised by the Israeli military potentially not investigating her death. "We were expecting this from the Israeli side. That's why we didn't want them to participate in the investigation," the family said in a statement to Al Jazeera. "We want to hold whoever is responsible for these acts accountable." "We urge the United States in particular - since she is a US citizen - and the international community to open a just and transparent investigation and to put an end to the killings." The veteran reporter, who lived in occupied East Jerusalem, was a US citizen. She spent nearly three decades covering the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. On the day she was killed, Abu Akleh was wearing a helmet and a vest clearly marked with the word "press". She was hit in the

back of the neck, in the small space between the helmet and the vest. Shots continued to be fired when colleagues and bystanders attempted to help Abu Akleh. The Abu Akleh family received reassurances from the US government that her killing would be investigated. Israeli authorities initially said Palestinian fighters were responsible for her death, circulating video of Palestinian men shooting down an alleyway. However, researchers from the prominent Israeli human rights group B'tselem found the spot where the clip was filmed: 300 metres (985 feet) away and with no line of sight to the location where Shireen was shot. Al Jazeera's Sanad news verification and monitoring unit also conducted an investigation and reached a similar conclusion. Israel later backtracked from its suggestion and said it would open an investigation into

the killing. Previous investigations into the killings of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers have led to controversy within Israel - many Israelis believe soldiers should not be prosecuted for such acts. "The reason for this is that you would actually have to open a criminal investigation into a serving Israeli army officer or soldier on an active military operation. That's something that Israeli politics in this current climate finds absolutely untenable," Al Jazeera's reporter Imran Khan said from West Jerusalem. "The government would be attacked if that investigation took place. The opposition would use it to make political ground." "Also, generally with Israelis itself, they see the army as being untouchable, as being defenders of Israel and therefore anything that they do on a military operation is untouchable," he said.

Russian soldier asks for forgiveness in trial

AGENCIES

KYIV: A 21-year-old Russian soldier asked a Ukrainian widow to forgive him for the murder of her husband, as a court in Kyiv met for a second hearing on Thursday in the first war crimes trial arising from Russia's Feb. 24 invasion.

Vadim Shishmarin, a tank commander, pleaded guilty on Wednesday to killing an unarmed 62-year-old civilian, Oleksandr Shelipov, in the northeast Ukrainian village of Chupakhivka on Feb. 28. "I acknowledge my blame... I ask you to forgive me," he told the widow, Kateryna Shelipova, at the hearing on Thursday attended by Reuters. Boyish, dressed in a tracksuit and with his shaven head lowered, Shishmarin cut a forlorn spectacle in a glass booth for defendants. He spoke calmly, but looked frightened. The Kremlin has said it has no information about the trial and that the absence of a diplomatic mission in Ukraine limits its ability to provide legal assistance. The widow told the court she had heard distant shots fired from their yard and that she had called out to her husband the day he was killed. "I ran over to my husband, he was already dead. Shot in the head. I screamed, I screamed so much," she said, speaking in her rural accent. She looked distraught and her voice trembled with emotion. Shelipova told the court she would not object if Shishmarin was released to Russia as part of a prisoner swap to get "our boys" out of the port city of Mariupol, a reference to hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers who have given themselves up to Russia. The trial takes place as much of Ukraine is gripped by the fate of its soldiers that it hopes Russia will hand over as part of an exchange. Some Russian voices are calling for them to be put on trial for crimes. Shelipova said her husband was dressed in civilian clothes. They had a 27-year-old son and two grandchildren together, she added.

Ukraine invasion can cause global food crisis

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Russia's invasion of Ukraine could soon cause a global food crisis that may last for years, the UN has warned. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the war had worsened food insecurity in poorer nations due to rising prices. Some countries could face long-term famines if Ukraine's exports are not restored to pre-war levels, he added. The conflict has cut off supplies from Ukraine's ports, which once exported vast amounts of cooking oil as well as cereals such as maize and wheat. This has reduced the global supply and caused the price of alternatives to soar. Global food prices are almost 30% higher than the same time last year, according to the UN. Speaking in New York on Wednesday, Mr Guterres said the conflict - combined with the effects of climate change and the pandemic - "threatens to tip tens of millions of people over the edge into food insecurity followed by malnutrition, mass hunger and famine". "There is not enough food in our world now if we act together. But unless we solve this problem today, we face the spectre of global food shortage in the coming months," he added. He warned that

the only effective solution to the crisis was reintegrating Ukraine's food production, as well as fertiliser produced by both Russia and Belarus, back into the global market. Mr Guterres also said he was in "intense contact" with Russia and Ukraine, as well as the US and the EU, in an effort to restore food exports to normal levels. "The complex security, economic and financial implications require goodwill on all sides," he said. His comments came on the same day the World Bank announced extra funding worth \$12bn (£9.7bn) for projects addressing food insecurity. The move will bring the total amount available for such projects to more than \$30bn over the next 15 months. Russia and Ukraine produce 30% of the world's wheat supply and - prior to the war - Ukraine was seen as the world's bread basket, exporting 4.5 million tonnes of agricultural produce per month through its ports. But since Russia launched its invasion in February, exports have collapsed and prices have skyrocketed. They climbed even further after India banned wheat exports on Saturday. The UN says around 20 million tonnes of grain are currently stuck in Ukraine from the previous harvest which, if released, could ease pressure on global markets.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohaib Mahmood receives U.S. Charge d' Affaires Aggeler for a farewell call. FS thanked the diplomat for her valuable contributions to Pakistan-U.S. ties. - DNA

Biden visits Japan, South Korea carrying warning to China

WEB DESK

TOKYO: Joe Biden will visit Japan and South Korea on his first Asian trip as U.S. president, carrying a clear message to China, advisers and analysts say - don't try what Russia did in Ukraine anywhere in Asia, and especially not in Taiwan. Biden departs for the five day trip on Thursday, after spending several months organizing allies to punish Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow calls a "special operation." He meets new South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol in Seoul and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo, leaders who share anxieties about North Korea and China and are eager to build on their long alliances with Washington. "At its core this (trip) is about building out the alliance network in East Asia," in part to counter any Chinese actions against Taiwan, said Evan Medeiros, an Asia specialist in the Barack Obama administration. Sweeping sanctions Biden led against Russia would not be so simple against Beijing. China is South Korea's largest trade partner, and the biggest source of goods that Japan imports, in each case beating no. 2 United States by a wide margin. Complicating Biden's message, his administration has not laid out a plan to counter Beijing if it moves to retake the self-governed island of Taiwan, even as U.S. intelligence sees preparations underway. Similarly, there's little public strategy to counter Beijing's no-COVID lockdown policy that some economists believe could provoke a global recession. Even with those shortcomings, support for Washington from Seoul and Tokyo is stronger than in recent history. "The president's lucky in who he has as counterparts," said Michael Green, an Asia specialist at the Washington think tank Center for Strategic and International Studies. "I was doing the math on this, and it's been at least 20 years since an American president could travel to Japan and Korea and count on the leaders in both countries being so forthrightly pro-alliance."

Tajik military launches operations on Afghan Border

AGENCIES

DUSHANBE: Tajikistan's Interior Ministry has announced the commencement of "anti-terrorist" military operations on the Border with Afghanistan and China to combat terrorism. Reuters also reported on Wednesday, May 18th, that the operation was launched in Gorno-Badakhshan region near the Tajik border with Afghanistan and China. Several days of protests in Tajikistan's Badakhshan province preceded the operation. The demonstrators claim that the governor and mayor of Badakhshan failed to appropriately prosecute the death of a civil activist in police custody, and that they should resign as a result. Several protesters were hurt in conflicts between police and protesters, according to eyewitnesses. The Tajik Interior Ministry said on Tuesday that one protester was killed and three police officers were injured during the protests.

Anti-Taliban leaders gather in Ankara

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: At a meeting in Turkey, a number of political leaders who have been in exile from Afghanistan when the Taliban reclaimed power agreed to form the Supreme Council of National Resistance for the Salvation of Afghanistan. The meeting took place on Tuesday night, May 17th, at Abdul Rashid Dostum's Ankara residence, the leader of Afghanistan's National Islamic Movement. Participants included Abdul Rashid Dostum, Mohammad Mohaqiq, Abdurrab Rasul Sayyaf, Atta Mohammad Noor, Mir Rahman Rahmani, Mohammad Alam Ezediyar, representatives of Salahuddin Rabbani and Ismail Khan, and others. The declaration called armed resistance against the Taliban in Panjshir, Baghlan, Takhar, Badakhshan, Parwan, Kapisa, Samangan, and other parts of the country "legitimate," and appealed for support for the resistance. Participants in the meeting stated that the Taliban had "aggressed and killed people" in defiance of all religious principles and humanitarian conventions, and that peo-

ple had been forced to defend their lives and property in various regions of the country. Article 2 of the declaration urges the Taliban to refrain from causing further "damage and devastation" in the country and to return to the negotiating table to settle the current issues. According to the article, the Taliban should be aware that, historically, no group has been able to establish a stable government in Afghanistan through coercion and violence. The "exclusive and usurper rule of the Taliban in Afghanistan" will result in widespread crisis and turmoil, and this situation will not benefit the neighboring countries or the region. The declaration stated, "Only a united Afghanistan and has a stable democratic system based on justice and equality can ensure their [neighboring countries' and region's] interests." The Taliban, on the other hand, has established the Return and Communications with Former Afghan Officials and Political Figures Commission. Inamullahullah Samangani, a Taliban spokesperson, told the BBC's Khalil Noori that the Communication Commission set up to organize an Afghan conference had finished contacting political figures.

Taliban orders female TV presenters to cover faces

WEB DESK

KABUL: The Taliban have ordered female Afghan TV presenters to cover their faces while on air. Media outlets were told of the decree on Wednesday, a religious police spokesman told BBC Pashto. The ruling comes two weeks after all women were ordered to wear a face veil in public, or face punishment. Restrictions on women are being tightened - they are banned from travelling without male relatives and secondary schools are shut for girls. The new decree is being widely criticised on Twitter, with many calling it another step by the Taliban to promote extremism. "The world deploys masks to protect people from Covid. The Taliban deploys masks to protect people from seeing the faces of women journalists. For the Taliban, women are a disease," one activist tweeted.

Blast on Taliban Corps Bus injures 3

WEB DESK

KABUL: According to Taliban security officials in Balkh province, the explosion took place this morning, May 19, in Mazar-e-Sharif's district 5. According to provincial police spokesperson Mohammad Asif Waziri, the explosion targeted a minibus, belonging to the Taliban's 209 AIFath corps, carrying civilian corps employees during the morning rush hour. He also added that the explosion which occurred near Khaliqdad public school, wounded three civilians, who were taken to the corps hospital. No group or individual has yet claimed responsibility for the explosion.

Chief of the Naval Staff visits Egypt

Chief of the Naval Staff was given detailed briefing on roles and capabilities of Egyptian Navy. The Admiral also visited onboard Mistral Helicopter Carrier and ENS BERNEES

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi is on official visit to Egypt. During the visit Naval Chief Called-on Commander-in-Chief of Egyptian Navy. Upon arrival at Egyptian Naval Headquarters, the Admiral was received by Commander in Chief of Egyptian Navy and was presented Guard of Honour. During Call-on with Egyptian Naval Chief, matters of bilateral naval collaboration and regional maritime security were discussed. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi underscored Pakistan Navy's initiative



for ensuring maritime security in the region through Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) and participation in Combined Maritime Force. Naval Chief highlighted importance of enhancing cooperation between the armed forces of both the countries through bilateral exercises and training programs. The dignitaries acknowledged the importance of strong military cooperation among the two countries. Chief of the Naval Staff was given detailed briefing on roles and capabilities of Egyptian Navy. The Admiral also visited onboard Mistral Helicopter Carrier and ENS BERNEES. It is expected that visit of the Naval Chief will further augment and expand defence ties between the two countries in general and navies in particular.