



Islamabad POST

Thursday, May 12, 2022

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Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh killed by Israeli troops

Detailed News On Page-08

British HC meets Punjab CM Hamza

Detailed News On Page-02



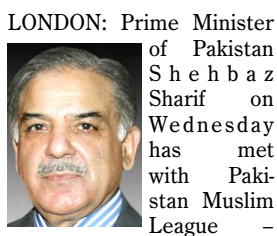
Bill Gates tests positive for Covid-19

Detailed News On Page-07



Briefs

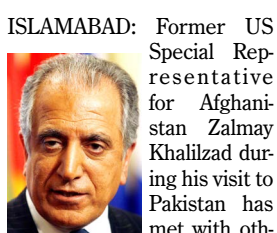
PM meets Nawaz in London



LONDON: Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday has met with Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PMLN) supremo Mian Nawaz Sharif in London. According to sources, during the meeting both leaders agreed not to go for early elections. PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif also briefed PM Shehbaz Sharif on the phone conversation with former President Asif Ali Zardari. On the other hand, PML-N vice president and Nawaz Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz has shared photos of the meeting between Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif in London in which former Federal Minister for Finance Ishaq Dar was also present. - APP

Zalmay Khalilzad visits Pakistan

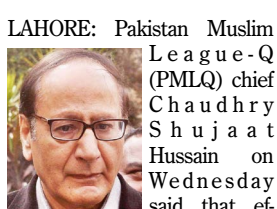
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Former US Special Representative for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad during his visit to Pakistan has met with other people from political and non-political circles. According to sources, Zalmay Khalilzad also met the leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). During the meeting, the rapidly changing political situation in Pakistan was discussed. It should be noted that Zalmay Khalilzad has served as the US Special Representative for Afghanistan for a long time.

Army must not be a topic of discussion

DNA



LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Q (PMLQ) chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain on Wednesday said that efforts are being made to make Institutions a topic of discussion in politics. Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain while talking to Muslim League leaders pointed out that attempts are being made to make politics and army a topic of discussion nowadays. He said the question is whether the army should have a role in politics or not.

China a key partner on all fronts: FM

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari holds first virtual meeting with Chinese counterpart; lauds Chinese support on various issues



ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held virtual meeting with State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi. State Councilor Wang Yi extended felicitations to the Foreign Minister on assumption of office. The two Foreign Ministers discussed bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest. The Foreign Minister conveyed that Pakistan enjoyed unique and time-tested bonds with China and appreciated the measures taken by the two sides to strengthen the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership between the two countries. The Foreign Minister thanked his

Continued on Page 06

Won't let 'lies' affect ties with Pakistan: US

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: State Department Spokesperson Ned Price has said the United States will not let "lies get in the way" of its bilateral ties with Pakistan, a relationship he stressed it values. Price made these remarks during a press briefing on Tuesday while answering a question about former prime minister Imran Khan blaming the US for his ouster from office and running an "anti-America campaign". "Sir, former prime minister Imran Khan is still blaming US efforts from - for his ouster from prime minister office and leading an anti-American campaign. So, do you think that his anti-American campaign [is] creating fractures among the structure of the

Continued on Page 06

ECP rejects PTI's reference against defecting MNAs

As per the decision, no substantial evidence was given

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday dismissed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) reference against its 20 defecting members of the National Assembly (MNAs) under Article 63-A of the Constitution for defying the party's directives. A three-member ECP panel headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja heard the case. The CEC read the verdict, which was earlier reserved by the panel. As per the decision, no substantial evidence was given against the defecting members in the reference. The reference was forwarded to the ECP by the National Assembly speaker seeking the disqualification of the PTI's defectors as MNAs over alleged floor-crossing. The disqualification reference against the PTI members had been moved under the relevant constitutional provision - which stipulates the de-seating of a party member in the event of defection. Earlier, the ECP refused to entertain an application by the PTI seeking to present additional records regarding the reference. During the hearing, Noor Alam Khan's lawyer, Barrister Gohar said, "Noor Alam was a

Continued on Page 06

Fawad says moving against ECP in SJC

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Fawad Chaudhry has said PTI is moving against the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). Talking to the media in Islamabad outside the ECP office, Fawad Chaudhry said that the PTI has decided to file a reference against the CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja and added that Faisal Fawda will move SJC in this regard. Fawad held ECP responsible for the current political turmoil in the country and added that former prime minister Imran Khan has lost his trust in the country's supreme electoral body. He asked the CEC to resign from his office as the country's largest political

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Canada's High Commissioner to Pakistan Wendy Gilmour calls on State Minister for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar. - DNA

'3 years needed to clean Imran's mess' Maryam dismissed all claims of Imran as "excuses"



DNA

SWABI: PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz on Wednesday claimed that the mismanagement of the previous PTI-led government would take at least two to three years to fix the country, saying mere one or two months were insufficient for the job. Addressing a rally in Swabi, Maryam called upon members of the opposition to avoid carrying "baggage of Imran's failures" in front of the public. She said all institutions were in the good books of Imran when he was in power, and "after relinquishing the charge, he is now targeting institutions". Maryam said Imran had nothing to boast about when it came to his performance as the prime minister. "The man who has nothing to tell the people about his achievement is now using a fake letter and making a fuss about a so-called conspiracy to hide his own poor performance." She dismissed all claims of Imran as "excuses". Maryam also accused the PTI chief of allegedly misusing state resources.

Commerce Ministry clarifies

No change in trade policy with India

The post of minister for trade and investment in New Delhi exists for more than two decades

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Commerce said that there is no change in Pakistan's policy on trade with India, a statement issued by the commerce ministry said Wednesday. According to the statement, the commerce ministry managed 57 trade missions in 46 countries, including the post of minister for trade and investment in New Delhi, India. The post of minister for trade and investment in New Delhi exists for more than two decades and has no connection with the operationalisation of trade with India or otherwise in the current context. The current cycle for selection of trade and investment officers (TIOs), including in New Delhi, was initiated in December 2021 and the final recommendations of the interview board were sent to the Prime Minister's Office on April 1, 2022, during the tenure of the previous government. The present government has given the final approval to the recommendations of the previous government for the selection of 15 TIOs. The appointment of a minister of trade and investment in New Delhi, therefore, may not be seen in the context of any relaxation of trade restrictions with India.

Qureshi slams decision to resume trade with India

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Reminding the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz-led coalition government that India had always flouted the security resolutions on Kashmir and had always been hostile towards Pakistan, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice Chairman and former foreign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said on Wednesday it was a matter of concern that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had decided to restore trade ties with India. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he said it was unfortunate that the prime minister had ordered the

Continued on Page 06

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Banned TTP extends ceasefire

So far government said nothing about ceasefire but Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif has already said, "government is ready for talks and reconciliation with banned TTP and other groups"

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Banned Tehrik Taliban Pakistan announced five days more extension to ceasefire with government to continue dialogue for reconciliation through a traditional mediatory Jirga of Mehsud tribe. The banned TTP spokesperson confirmed extension but said nothing about future. However, Mehsud Jirga spokesperson said, "10-member jirga reached Afghanistan where they will hold dialogues with banned TTP chief Mufti Noor Wali Mehsud." According to ceasefire decision on the part of banned TTP, overall law and order situation remained peaceful from last several days. Earlier, the previous April experienced most violent month since empowering of Taliban in mid of August 2021 last. A non gov-

ernment organization reported 34 heinous terror acts during April causing losses to 55 and injuries to 26 others. Whereas in March 2022 only 26 terror incident reported but the causes were so severe due to deadly suicide attacks against a Mosque during Friday prayers which took lives of 77 and injuries to over 150 persons.

"So far government said nothing about ceasefire but Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif has already said, "government is ready for talks and reconciliation with banned TTP and other groups. Though spokesman has just confirmed, "taking government into confidence regarding initiating mediation between TTP and government" the Mehsud tribesmen constituted the Jirga according to directives of army officers and spy agencies." The jirga members will also meet Taliban leaders including Interior

Minister Siraj Ud Din Haqqani who is chief of powerful Haqqani Network and considered very close to Pakistan secret agencies. Since empowering of Taliban in mid of August 2021, it is the second ceasefire between banned TTP and government. Earlier, first ever ceasefire brokered between the two sides by most effective component of Afghan Taliban-the Haqqani network in November. However, it was terminated by TTP after action of security forces against some of its fighters.

Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif advisor to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister has already declared that efforts are underway for reconciliation with banned TTP and other groups through different Jirga's and mediators. He said government believes in reconciliation which is essential for ending of terror and violence throughout the country.

Govt increases number of varsities in KP

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Minister for Health and Finance Taimur Jhagra has said that we have to increase the number of universities in the province and also pay attention to their quality. The provincial government is introducing education policies keeping in view the market demand. We can successfully tackle the challenge of unemployment by creating more opportunities for vocational education. The services rendered by Khyber Medical University (KMU) through medical education and research as well as through the Public Health Reference Lab and Corona Vaccination Center during the Corona Outbreak are a testament to the vision, priorities and performance of the provincial government. He expressed these views while addressing a function at KMU

to distribute scholarship cheques among students and to inaugurate a new branch of Khyber Bank at KMU. On the occasion, Minister Higher Education Kamran Bangash, former Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia ul-Haq, Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Lal Muhammad, Registrar Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Gandapur, Director ORIC Dr. Zohaib Khan, Deans of various faculties, Directors, Faculty, administrative officers and a large number of students were also present. Taimur Jhagra said that despite the difficult situation, the provincial government has taken revolutionary steps in the fields of health and education, a prime example of which is the provision of free medical care up to Rs one million to every citizen of the province. He said that we are proud of the services rendered by

KMU in the field of medical education and hoped that this journey of success would be continued with the same enthusiasm. He said that since health is related to human lives, we have to keep this sacred profession free from politics. Earlier addressing the function, Prof. Dr. Zia ul-Haq said that in a short span of time, the number of educational institutions affiliated with KMU in various fields has reached 200 and the number of students has crossed the figure of 50,000 which is a sign of full confidence in KMU. He said that it was gratifying that KMU was bearing the financial burden of 80% of its expenses and this honor was unmatched by any other public sector university in the province. He said that after setting up eight campuses in different districts of the province including Islamabad, KMU would soon open

sub-campus in the merged tribal district of North Waziristan. He said that nine different types of scholarships are being provided to the students in KMU from which thousands of students are benefiting which constitutes about one third of the total students of the University. He thanked the Minister for Health and Finance and the management of Khyber Bank for opening a branch of the Bank in the university and reiterated all possible cooperation with Khyber Bank in the future as well. Provincial Higher Education Minister Kamran Bangash and former Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed also addressed the function and answered questions from students. In the end, scholarship cheques were distributed among 37 students under HEC Need based and Pak USAID Scholarships programs.



LAHORE: British HC Christain Turner met Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz. – DNA

Restraining order removed against press club polls

ANWAR CHOHAN

KHARIAN: Civil Judge Kharian Fawad-ur-Rehman dismissed the restraining order against Chairman Election Board Kharian Press Club Liaquat Ali Qadri. Yesterday, the civil judge of the local court of Kharian, Fawad Al-Haman, removed the restraining order against the election of Kharian Press Club. Kharian Press Club candidate for the presidency Aftab Ahmad Nazar had filed an application in local court against Chairman Election Board Liaquat Ali Qadri for restraining the election. Club member Mohammad Imran Khilji obtained a restraining order from the local court on February 19 to stop the election of Kharian Press Club, on which the chairman of the election board had postponed the election indefinitely, and the election process will continue till the court decides. Stopped. The court was informed yesterday by the Chairman Election Board, Chaudhry Tariq Mehmood Amra Advocate and Chaudhry Majeedullah Malhi Advocate. No action has been taken against the constitution of the club, therefore the restraining order against the election board of Kharian Press Club should be removed and an order should be issued to hold the election in accordance with the constitution of Kharian Press Club. The restraining order against the club's election board has been removed.

British HC meets CM, vows to continue co-op

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: British High Commissioner Christain Turner met Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz at Chief Minister Office here on Wednesday and vowed to continue cooperation with the Punjab government in the education, health and other social sectors adding that England Cricket Team will visit Pakistan in September. Matters pertaining to mutual interests, promotion of Pakistan-UK relations and enhancing cooperation in the social sector came under discussion during the meeting. He also felicitated Hamza

Shahbaz on assuming the office of the chief minister. The chief minister talking on this occasion, said that Pakistan and UK are an important partners in journey of progress and prosperity. He appreciated the British cooperation and role for the promotion and improvement of education, health, law & order and other social sectors. Hamza Shahbaz said that under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, a result-oriented strategy has been formulated for the uplift of education, health, law & order and other social sectors. He said the government would work to further promote ties with the UK in

various sectors. The CM maintained that the present government is advancing forward with a new vigour and resolve for ensuring the progress of the country. Hamza Shahbaz categorically remarked that it is a mission to make Pakistan an enlightened and progressive country. The British delegation comprised Alex Ballinger representative to Punjab, Political Advisor Talal Raza and Development Advisor Sana Zia. Chairman P&D, Secretaries Finance, Industries, School Education, Higher Education and Food along with CEO PBIT and concerned officials were also present on this occasion.

Joint steps to be taken for strengthening bilateral ties

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif Wednesday said that joint steps would be taken to further strengthen the long-standing fraternal ties between Pakistan and Iran. He expressed these views during a meeting with Mehran Iskandrian, Director Cultural Center, Iranian Consulate General, Peshawar. Issues of mutual interest and cooperation were discussed on the occasion, according to an official communiqué issued here after the meeting. Barrister Saif said, "the people of the two countries are culturally connected and joint steps would be taken to bring them closer together". – APP

Punjab announces vacations in schools

LAHORE: The Punjab education department on Wednesday finalised the summer vacations schedule for all public and private educational institutions. According to Punjab School Education Department, the summer vacations in schools and other educational institutions will begin from June 1 till July 31. The new academic year 2022-23 will start from August 1, according to education department. Similarly, the examinations of classes 1-8 will begin in the month of May and results would be announced before May 31. Recently, the Sindh education department also announced to start the new academic year 2022-23 from August 1. – DNA

Commissioner reviews actions regarding the marriage act



ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Zahid Husain has ordered stern legal action for violating the Marriage Act and said that action will not be avoided against those who do not abide by the law of one-dish and fixed time of 10 pm in wedding ceremonies. He

cleared that on violation not only the marriage halls would be sealed rather the owners as well as the hosts will be affected by the law. He chaired meeting with owners of marriage hall and catering association. He directed the Assistant Commissioners for regularly checked the wedding ceremonies held at marriage halls, hotels, parks and

other places and Stern action should be taken against violators. He asked the owners of marriage halls and catering to avoid violation. Commissioner said to the citizens to implement the one dish in marriages and did not force the marriage halls administration to violate otherwise legal action would also be taken against them also.

Solution to the current crisis is immediate elections

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Former Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri, Former Federal Minister Ali Muhammad Khan And Former special assistant Zulfi Bukhari has said that The people want to get rid of the imported government. Those who are shouting about inflation are now hiding their faces from the people. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Leaders expressed these views on Wednesday in Pindi Gheb Attock. Former Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri said that The



imported government has completely failed to provide relief to the people. Imran Khan's call for protest will prove to be a game changer. Former Federal Minister Ali Muhammad Khan said that Imran Khan is the last hope of the nation. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's statement is immediate elections. The people want to

get rid of the imported government. Graph of Imran Khan's popularity already Has also multiplied. Former special assistant Zulfi Bukhari said that Pakistan is suffering from severe economic crisis. The only solution to the current crisis in the country was Election. He said that PTI meeting in Attock would be historic.

ACDC-ISSI holds webinar on data and national security

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Arms Control & Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a Webinar on "Big Data for National Security: A Case of Pakistan" on May 11, 2022. Speakers included Dr Muhammad Ali Ismail, Principle Investigator, National Center of Big Data & Cloud Computing (NCBC), Karachi, Dr Hussain Nadim, Executive Director (C&R), Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) and Ms Aamna Rafiq, Research Associate ACDC-ISSI.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, said that big data refers to a collection of data that is enormous and comes at you with great speed. Big data needs to be managed and analysed for it to be useful. This data explosion is touching every aspect of life human security, finance,

banking and agricultural sector and is also playing a big part in the technological race between the US and China. Pakistan needs to be aware of how big data can help or undermine our national security. Earlier in his introductory remarks, Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC, said that big data analytics is positively transforming the ways of doing business, trade, governance, politics, communications and social services. However, its misuse can equally exacerbate existing national security threats and can create new and unpredictable ones. Dr Muhammad Ali Ismail spoke on "Big Data for Human Security in Pakistan." He said that National Center in Big data and cloud computing's objective was to provide a platform for the development and deployment of cutting edge solutions related to big data using open source tools. The centre is working on astrophysics, genomics, tsunami modelling and traffic modelling.



CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY Water Supply Directorate ***** TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis at NIT cost from the Contractors duly enlisted with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in appropriate category / Code and having valid PEC license, along with NTN / GST number as applicable for the works as detailed below:-

| S# | Name of Work | NIT amount in PKR | E/Money amount in PKR | Tender Fee Non Refundable amount in PKR | Tender opening Date/Time | Tender opening Date/Time |
|----|--|-------------------|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Replacement of 15" dia PRCC line with 16" dia M.S line in Green Belt for feeding Sector F-7, Islamabad. | 42,818,548/- | 1,284,556/- | 5,000/- | 30.05.2022 11:30 AM | 30.05.2022 12:00 (Noon) |
| 2. | Replacement of 15" dia PRCC line with 16" dia M.S line in Green Belt for feeding F-8 Sector, Islamabad. | 38,134,474/- | 1,144,034/- | 5,000/- | 30.05.2022 11:30 AM | 30.05.2022 12:00 (Noon) |
| 3. | Providing / Laying of HDPE / M.S conduction line at different Tube Wells of H & T Series, Islamabad | 9,262,034/- | 277,861/- | 5,000/- | 30.05.2022 11:30 AM | 30.05.2022 12:00 (Noon) |
| 4. | Construction of 18" avenue from J.P. Road to Srinagar Highway, Islamabad (Phase-I) shifting of water supply line. | 36,238,335/- | 1,087,150/- | 5,000/- | 30.05.2022 11:30 AM | 30.05.2022 12:00 (Noon) |
| 5. | P/I of deep well turbine pumping sets complete with motors of different capacities at various locations. | 49,782,874/- | 1,493,486/- | 5,000/- | 31.05.2022 11:30 AM | 31.05.2022 12:00 (Noon) |
| 6. | P/I of 16" dia HDPE line from 21" dia PRCC line of Center Pump to Poona Faqir Plant. | 21,506,531/- | 645,196/- | 5,000/- | 31.05.2022 11:30 AM | 31.05.2022 12:00 (Noon) |
| 7. | Replacement of 18" dia PRCC pipe line with 18" dia M.S line at different locations from RL-1 water works to Shakar Parian Reservoir. | 24,122,644/- | 723,679/- | 5,000/- | 31.05.2022 11:30 AM | 31.05.2022 12:00 (Noon) |
| 8. | Replacement of valves of different dias at Korang Water Works. | 1,973,562/- | 60,000/- | 3,000/- | 31.05.2022 11:30 AM | 31.05.2022 12:00 (Noon) |

- Tender forms / documents for the work mentioned at serial No.1 to 2 can be purchased on cash payment (non-refundable) from the office of Dy. Director (Distribution North), CDA located at Room No.157, for the work mentioned at serial No.3 can be purchased on cash payment (non-refundable) as mentioned above from the office of Dy. Director Production-II located at Room No.160, for the work mentioned at serial No.4 can be purchased on cash payment (non-refundable) from the office of Dy. Director (Distribution South), CDA located at Room No.155 and for the work mentioned at Serial No.5 to 8 can be purchased on cash payment (non-refundable) as mentioned above from the office of Dy. Director Production-I located at Room No.166, First Floor, Mayor Secretariat, Melody Sector G-6, Islamabad respectively during working hours. Last date for submission of application for purchase of tender form document is 27.05.2022 till closing hours.
- Applications on original letter Pad for issuance of tender documents shall accompany the name, address(s), signature of contractor and valid enlistment / renewal of Firm with PEC, attested copy of CNIC, Professional Tax Certificate active NTN/GST Number and at-least two number of work order in last two financial years.
- The owner of firm should submit the application and collect the tender documents by himself. In case of representative copy of CNIC along with general, special power of attorney through respective court must be attached with the application. The attorney holder must be legitimate and should not be the employees of any Government / Semi Government Institute.
- Earnest Money in shape of call deposit generated only from firm account bearing name of firm in favor of concerned Dy. Director as per S.No.1 from local scheduled Bank of Islamabad must accompany with the application. Without call deposit no application for issuance of tender will be entertained. Cash/cheque will not be accepted.
- Tenders for the works mentioned above will be received and opened by the Director Water Supply, CDA at Room No.16, Ground Floor, Old Naval Headquarter, Melody Sector G-6, Islamabad in the presence of Contractors are their authorized representatives who care to attend.
- The contractors who are interested to participate in above mentioned tenders, they will have to submit their experience certificate along-with performance certificate of complete works of similar nature (at least 02) during the last three financial years while submitting application, otherwise the tender will not be issued.
- The contractors will submit the documents as per instructions of tender documents along with their tender, without which tender will be liable for rejection.
- The relative of tendering Authority should not be entertained for participation in tendering.
- The Bid Security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank account and same should be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder.
- In case the total bid amount is less than 10% below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10% of NIT amount. That is required performance security = NIT amount - total bid amount - 10% of NIT amount. This call deposit shall be in addition to the earnest money for the work and shall be deposited at the time of submission of bids. Bids not carrying the performance security shall be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of the project.
- PEC Certificate 2021-22 and professional tax certificate in original will be seen before issuance of tender.
- CDA may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance of bid proposal. CDA shall upon request, communicate to any contractor or Supplier who submitted a bid or proposal, but is not required to justify those grounds.
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| 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 Forced 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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Marriott.....051- 2826121
Monal.....0334-5421812



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

Rescue (Police).....15
Bomb Disposal.....15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....1122
& Rescue Services.4451122
Motorway Police.....9266044
Motorway Police.....9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIA Flight Info.....114
PIA Cargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....555489
CAA.....9281092



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DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
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PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International.4603666



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Minister urges govt depts. to shift data on NTC system

IT Minister Syed Amin Ul Haque said that NTC thwarted lacs of cyber attacks last year which is the proof of its safe and secure system. He said that NTC has effective cyber security system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque has urged all government departments to shift their data on safe and secure system of National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC). The Federal Minister for IT & Telecom was chairing meeting regarding cyber security here on Wednesday. Additional Secretary (Incharge) Ministry of IT and Telecommunication Mohsin Mushtaq, Chairman PTA Maj Gen (Retd) Amir Azeem Bajwa, MD National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) Meraj Gul, Executive Director National Information Technology Board (NITB) Syed Hasnain Kazmi,



and senior officers of the Ministry were present in the meeting. IT Minister Syed Amin Ul Haque said that NTC thwarted lacs of

cyber attacks last year which is the proof of its safe and secure system. He said that NTC has effective cyber security system.

It is vital that all the government departments should shift their data on the safe and secure system of NTC, he added.

Federal Minister also emphasised upon shifting of E-cabinet and E-office system to separate system for making it further secure. He urged all public and private departments to harmonise their security system with modern requirements. Earlier, the chair was given briefing on attempted cyber attack on NTC networking side.

The meeting was told that no data was lost or leak following cyber attack on networking side, and some services were automatically suspended which were reactivated within three hours. A committee was also formed under Additional Secretary MoITT, Aisha Humera to know the causes of cyber attacks and their prevention in future

Governor removed as per constitution: Tarar told NA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday said the Punjab governor had been removed in line with the law and constitution of the Pakistan. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said "As per the constitution of the country, the president is bound to act as per the advice of the cabinet and Prime Minister". He also quoted a decision of the apex court of 2012 in which directions had been issued to implement the advice of PM in the removal of governor. The minister said on the advice of the then prime min-

ister Imran Khan, when he was facing a no-confidence motion in the National Assembly, the president had removed and appointed governors within no time.

Tarar said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had advised the President twice for removal of the Punjab governor, but it was not implemented. Following which, the federal government notified that Punjab Governor Omar Sarfraz Cheema had ceased to hold office on the advice of the prime minister sent to the president on April 17 and reinforced on May 1.

"If the parliament and the constitution are not defended at present, we will be

ashamed before the next generation," he added. Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Ashtar Ausaf Ali elaborated the Article 48 (2) of the Constitution and said whenever the matter (governor's appointment/removal) was taken to the courts they viewed "it is the pleasure of the prime minister, pleasure of the federal government and not of the president."

Commenting on removal of Punjab governor, he said it was clearly mentioned that only the appointing authority could remove, adding it could not happen that Prime Minister appointed [the governor] and be retained by President. The

same rule applied for the office of AGP said. "It (removal of the Punjab governor) is not only in line with the Constitution, the Business Rules and decision of the Supreme Court," he said. Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) MNA Ghous Bux Mahar said the Constitution was not clear on the procedure of removing a governor unless he/she tendered resignation himself/herself. The GDA members opposed a resolution presented in the House by MNA Mohsin Dawar urging the President of Pakistan to play a role of non-partisan while dealing with state affairs, keeping in view the Constitutional provisions.

NA offers Fateha for MNA Ehsanullah's mother

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly on Wednesday offered fateha for the departed soul of mother of Member National Assembly Ehsanullah Reki. Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali led the Fateha on the request of Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf. - APP

Govt to focus on youth in Budget 2022-23, says Ahsan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal Wednesday said the government was giving special priority to the youth of the country in the incoming budget for fiscal year 2022-23, as number of new initiatives were being considered for them. He said in the upcoming budget, the

government would introduce multiple skills training projects for the youth to enable them earn their livelihoods besides contributing to the country's productivity. Addressing media here, the minister said the budget would enable youth to get more employment opportunities in the upcoming fiscal

year. He said in the next budget the government would also give special focus on the education sector and will increase fund allocation for the higher education. Projects of sports and recreational activities would also be introduced in the upcoming budget, the minister added. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Syed Naveed Qamar in a meeting with Ambassador of Spain, Manuel Duran Gimenez-Rico. - DNA

Estate Office vacates over 2,800 properties from occupants

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Estate Office, Ministry of Housing and Works have so far vacated over 2,800 government properties from illegal occupants and handed over to the entitled persons across the country. The Capital Development Authority and other relevant departments of the provincial governments have helped the Estate Office to vacate government properties," sources in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP. They said that the Ministry was also considering taking action against the encroachments and illegally

constructed structures in government residences in the federal capital. A punitive action would be taken against the construction of extra rooms by the employees and their kith and kin, which lived in the government allotted houses, they added. At present, the sources said over 17,000 government houses in Islamabad were under the management of the Estate Office and additional rooms had illegally been constructed by the allottees in over 2,400 residences. The basic purpose of the operation was to clear the government residences of encroachments, they added.

PNCA to launch book 'Conversations with my Father'

A person, who I too (in my own very limited way), have loved back unconditionally despite that time and again I wanted to have a confrontation with him, yell at him, fight with him, tell him off or forsake him. And who now, in the twilight of my life, I miss more than when he was actually present here with me

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) would launch a book titled "Conversations with my Father: Forty years on, a daughter responds" by Moneeza Hashmi on May 14 (Saturday). Panelists include Iftekhar Arif, Dr Arfa Syeda Zehra, Harris Khaliq, Dr Yousaf Khushk, Moneeza Hashmi, an official of PNCA Masroor Shah told media on Wednesday. Moneeza Hashmi in her statement said that "Firstly, I am still struggling with myself, having lived in the 'semi' limelight for most of my life. Partly as the daughter of a great poet; partly as the sister of a great painter; partly on management posts of the only TV public

broadcaster in Pakistan; partly as the only woman to head the programming of a public broadcaster; partly as the mother of two talented and wonderful professionals in their own right. And so on and so forth. It may be hard to believe that as time has moved on, my own desire to stand on centre stage and think, "Wow this feels great!" has diminished considerably. I prefer to manage from behind the scenes and let others in the family be in the spotlight and applaud their performances. Secondly, this has been a private matter between myself and my father. The letters I mean. He wrote them to me and at the time none of us probably ever thought they would get published. So, is this the right thing to be doing is a question which has



plagued me and continues to do. Am I breaking a sacred trust here? Am I guilty of some sort of a betrayal or perhaps the only person I am indebted to for so much in this life? Do I want to share these private moments

with the world at large? Will anybody actually understand the bond I shared (and still share) with my father? This is one side of him that no one (other than my sister) ever knew. Do I want to give even away and make it public? And hence the hesitation, the anxiety, the holding back, the delay, until it became a nagging thought. And here I am, at the very beginning. And it begins, a journey back through time. A journey which will cause me (some) pain and heartache, as well as joy as I relive the past. A journey which will make me rethink relationships; a journey which will probably make me wish I had not taken it up but nonetheless a journey which may make me feel relieved to have taken it up; a journey in which I must ask

for forgiveness and understanding (in advance) of all those who I may hurt, embarrass, scratch or irritate. That never was, or ever could be, my intention. But it is a journey of love and a tribute to the one human being, who I know loved me unconditionally, hugged me, held my hand, gave me a smile in those times when I felt lost, alone and abandoned. A person, who I too (in my own very limited way), have loved back unconditionally despite that time and again I wanted to have a confrontation with him, yell at him, fight with him, tell him off or forsake him. And who now, in the twilight of my life, I miss more than when he was actually present here with me. And so, dear reader, I present to you, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, the father.

'Chandra Beqadra' hits 2m views on YouTube

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Bollywood superstar Reema Khan's latest song 'Chandra Beqadra' in Kashmir Beats Season 2 crossed 2 million views on YouTube. Director, producer and television host, Reema Khan after entertaining the audience with hit movies, has now taken the mic to amuse fans. Recently, Reema Khan appeared in Kashmir Beats Season 2 and left audience in awe by singing 'Chandra Beqadra' which instantly got attention of her fans. Shortly after the release, fans showered love on Reema and bombarded the comment section on YouTube with comments appreciating the star. Netizens also praised Reema for being natural on stage as well as for singing a song that suited her charming personality. According to the official YouTube channel of Kashmir Beats Season 2 "A sweet and cheeky ballad condensed in a love tale 'Chandra Beqadra' featuring the gorgeous Reema Khan that gives life to a soulful connection between two people." 'Chandra Beqadra' was produced and directed by none other than the very talented Haris Qadeer while the composition and lyrics were done by Shani Arshad.

30 % work on New Balakot City completed: NA told

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Javed Abbasi on Thursday informed the National Assembly that unfortunately 30 per cent work on New Balakot City has been completed so far. In response to a question during Question Hour, the minister said the federal government had released Rs 1.5 billion for acquisition of land to the provincial Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa government in 2007. PC-1 of New Balakot City Development Project was approved by the ECNEC amounting to Rs 12,000 million, he said. The minister said a total of Rs 2,969 million has been released and spent on the project so far. However the responsibility rests with the provincial government to complete the remaining 70 per cent work, he said. He said work on the project was delayed due to non-availability of encumbrance free land and funds besides resistance from locals. He said Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) has been mandated by the government to work in 9 districts of Earthquake-2005 affected areas which include Abbottabad, Mansehra, Battagram, Shangla and Kohistan in KP and Muzaffrabad, Bagh, Poonch and Neelum in AJZ while Chitral was out of ambit of ERRA. To another separate question, the minister said no development funds were released by the former government to the members of the National Assembly. - APP

Body formed to probe cyber attack

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication has constituted a committee to find out the reasons behind the foiled cyberattack attempt on the NTC networking side. The committee, headed by the IT minister, additional secretary, would also ensure that such attacks do not occur in future. The body included the officers from PTA, NTC and other relevant departments. The decision to this effect was taken in an important meeting held here under the chairmanship of Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Syed Amin-ul-Haque, said a news release. The meeting was also attended by the Secretary, Additional Secretary of the ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication, PTA Chairman, Member IT, Member Telecom, NTC Managing Director, National Information Technology Board Executive Director and others. - APP

Briefs

Increase in transport fares: Action demanded

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Representatives of civil society, students and female passengers on Wednesday called on the authorities to take stern action against the increase in public transport fares. They demanded that the authorities concerned should consider their real demand and start an effective service. In the Twin Cities, rising transport fares on a daily basis are causing problems for many women and students. Talking to media, a passenger, Tahrim Fatima said that the fare has become too high which she cannot afford in her meager salary. "There is a dire need to start a safer, cheaper and more convenient transport service, especially for working women," she said. She said that only two seats were reserved for women in public transport which were not enough for a large number of working women. General Secretary Rawalpindi Taxi Union Mustafa Khan said that after the record increase in prices of petroleum products, taxi and rickshaw drivers would suffer huge losses if they adhered to the existing fares. He said that due to a shortage of supply the demand for passengers has increased so they have to increase fares to meet the demand of passengers. "We set up a mechanism for check and balance in private taxi association fares," he said.

Introducing electoral reforms top most agenda

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Senator AzamNasirTarar Wednesday said that present government' top agenda to introduce electoral reforms in the country would ensure transparency in the democratic process and level playing field for all political parties. Talking to PTV news TV channel, he said the government was ready to hear opposition regarding the issue of reforms as it is a matter of the "future of Pakistan's democracy". He said right of vote to overseas Pakistanis cannot be given till the required legislation is done by the parliament regarding various practical legal aspects, adding, proper dialogue and debate would be the best way to tackle the issue. He said electoral reform committee would further discuss all legal points to ensure the rights of overseas Pakistanis adding PML-N would support the right to vote for Pakistanis abroad under a democratic approach and principles. "Overseas are our precious asset and the pride of Pakistan," he added. Replying a question, he said as per the vision of the Prime Minister ShabbazSharif, the government is utilizing all available resources to provide maximum relief to the common man from effects of price hike. Minister also reiterated his government's firm commitment for the promotion and protection of human rights including the rights of women, children, and minorities in Pakistan.

IRSA releases 164531 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Wednesday released 164531 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 179881cases. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1081.90 feet, which was 31.09 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded a 38165 and 33315 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 70479,73077 and 29465 cases respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River, a total of 36000 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 20216 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. – APP

Elections reforms is top most agenda of govt: Kaira

The SAPM said the president of the country was playing a role of opposition leader which was not suited him

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs QamarZamanKaira on Tuesday said introducing election reforms was the top most agenda of the incumbent government as all the political parties should have to work to bring out the country from different challenges. Taking to a private news channel, he said hard decisions would be taken for betterment of the country and although it was difficult to go in elections after taking hard decisions but we would go. He said decision would be taken with consensus of all political allied parties regarding to hold next general elections, adding technically it was difficult to hold the general elections before six to seven months. Replying to a question, he categorically denied that the Pakistan Peoples Party leadership to stop PPP cabinet ministers to go London for holding meeting with Muhammad Nawaz Sharif he said adding it was purely PML-N's internal meeting so nor they called PPP and neither appropriate for us to attend that meeting. The SAPM said the president of the



ISLAMABAD: Qamar Zaman Kaira, Prime Minister Adviser on Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs meeting with former AJK Prime Minister Sardar Yaqoob. – DNA

country was playing a role of opposition leader which was not suited him.

He said former prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was also worried

about the current situation of the country and its problems as well.

Rs.2.7b scam unearthed in sugar industry

President Alvi confirms FTOs recommendation to take action as per Benami Transaction Act

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah has unearthed a bog Scam of selling Sugar to unregistered buyers. An Own Motion Investigation was based on an in-house "Sector Analysis Exercise", and aimed at hitherto Un-Registered / Non-NTN Holders / Non-Filers, who had been buying huge quantities of sugar from sugar mills / manufacturers. Bottom line of the instant OM was the fact that sugar sector was one of the major sectors of the economy wherein a huge chunk of un-registered persons was available for Broadening of Tax Base. As that low hanging fruit had yet not been harvested therefore those un-registered buyers, despite making huge monetary transactions, thus far mostly remained outside the Tax net. The FBR's failure to tap the potential of that segment was mainly embedded in

an operational/ procedural paradox, whereby LTOs which hold jurisdiction over Sugar Mills & access to buyers' data were not obligated with the Broadening of Tax Base and the RTOS which had to shoulder the responsibility of Broadening had no access to that vitally important data of Unregistered Persons. In addition, the lackluster audits, compromised enforcement and non-implementation of relevant law and rules were few other negatively contributing factors shielding those high potential Un-registered Persons due to inattention and in efficiency of field formation. These Unregistered Buyers being wholesaler, dealer or distributor were required to be registered under Sales Tax irrespective of value of turnover/ supplies in lenns of Section 14(e) of Sales Tax Act 1990. Further, those Unregistered Persons/Entities were easily identifiable because sugar mills are required to maintain records of

supplies made during the Tax period and issue Tax Invoices indicating' name, address, description, quantity, value of goods, CNIC or NTN of the unregistered person Lo whom supplies were made and the amount of the Tax charged under Section 22 & 23 of Sales Tax Act 1990. Above all, being a private limited company, it was bound to maintain complete record of all transactions under SECPs Regulations, Sales Tax Act 1990 and Income Tax Ordinance 2001. Mis Naudero Sugar Mills (Pvt) Limited was a private limited company incorporated in Pakistan and was engaged in the manufacturing and marketing of refined sugar & other allied products. It had been observed that bulk of its sale was being made to the Unregistered Persons/ Non-NTN Holders / Non-Filers, who were liable to be registered in the Sales Tax as well as in Income Tax but despite making huge monetary transactions those potential investors, went scot free without disclos-

ing their identity and remain outside the Tax Net. The learned Federal Tax Ombudsman called the comments of the Secretary, Revenue Division, Islamabad regarding the details of the Unregistered Buyers as per special Tax Year 2018, 2019, 2020 & 2021. As can be observed from the above data that sugar worth of Rs.2.708 Billion was supplied to various unregistered buyers in last four years and only three buyers hold NTN and in Active Taxpayers' List. The DR was specifically asked to explain the negligence in collecting data related to unregistered persons involved in transactions of billions of Rupees during "Withholding audit normal regular audit, or through enforcement of withholding statements under Section 2360 & H by invoking provision of Section 165(28) or simply requisitioning with the help of Section 176 of the Ordinance, for the purpose of broadening of Tax Base.

Indian educated official makes SBBWUP a battleground

ISLAMABAD: An influential official with Indian education and unrecognised degrees has taken administration of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar (SBBWUP) hostage with the help of her connections. Ms Zohra Shahzad who failed the screening test of Assistant Registrar in 2010 was later appointed as Deputy Registrar directly and her connection helped her to become Additional Registrar soon. The post of Registrar was kept vacant for years so that Ms Zohra Shahzad can work as Registrar and she was helped by the political elite to evade the orders of KP Govt and Higher Education Department (HED) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to get degrees of all the employees of the university verified, sources said. The absence of verification of her documents is not only a security threat but also a gross violation of rules and regulations but she continues to enjoy all perks and privileges, they added. In a bid to increase her influence, she has helped many through forged papers, illegal appointments and unlawful extensions and wasted a lot of government money to please the influential. She is also connected to some media men who are used to malign the administration of the university but so far no action has been taken against her. – APP

Pakistan's exports to Italy increase 35%

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports of goods and services to Italy witnessed an increase of 35.58 percent during the first three quarters of fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the exports of corresponding period of last year. The overall exports to Italy were recorded at \$758.795m during July-March (2021-22) against exports of \$559.664m during July- March (2020-21), showing growth of 35.58 percent, according to SBP. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports to Italy also increased by 42.79 percent by going up from \$75.006m during March 2021 against the exports of \$107.105 million in March 2022, the SBP data revealed. – APP

Hard decisions to be taken in larger interest of country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior RanaSanaullah on Tuesday said hard decisions would have to be taken in the larger interest of the country as the incumbent government was making efforts to resolve the national issues. Talking to a private news channel, he said there was no any pressure on the government regarding political gathering of the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI). He said peaceful protest was the constitutional right of everyone but it should be under the constitutional parameters,

adding Imran Khan had realised that he spoke wrong during his last address at Abbottabad though he was calling Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif name in his speeches. He said PM Shehbaz Sharif had never commander in chief of the country. The minister said Imran Khan did not stand on his own talks he changed his views day by day and he always contradicted his previous statement, adding Imran Khan was an arrogant person that's why his allied political parties and his party members parted their ways from him. Replying to a question, he said Imran Khan could not get that intervention

which he wants and all the national institutions were working in their defined parameters. RanaSanaullah said the PTI and Imran Khan should be answerable before the people regarding misdoings and corruption which they had made during their government tenure when they go in their constituencies during the elections. He said the government would decide about next general with consensus of its allied political parties, adding time should be given to Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) which it demanded for holding the next general elections.

TDAP set to participate in Auto mechanika Frankfurt

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is all set to participate in Automechanika Frankfurt schedule from September 13 – 17 this year. "Trade development authority of Pakistan will participate with Pakistan pavilion in Automechanika Frankfurt 13 – 17 September 2022," according to press statement received here. Interested companies have been advised to apply for registration through TDAP by May 20, 2022 and get connected with the future of the automotive service industry at the leading trade fair. TDAP is providing subsidized stalls to increase the exports of auto parts, tyres& systems, products related to repair and maintenance of cars, trucks and lubricants. In the last edition of 2018 as many as 4,987 exhibitors from 76 countries participated to meet 134,622 buyers from 184 countries at Automechanika Frankfurt. The Pakistani exhibitors that participated in the event since last 2 editions included Adamjee Engineering, Darson Industries, Infinity Engineering, Ghauri Tires, Jodhala Complex, Korteck Auto Industries, MannanShahid Forgings, Matchless Engineering, MGA Industries, Rastgar engineering, Thermosole Industries, Meralastik Rubber Products, Ahmed Traders, Ammarian Industries, A-One Techniques, Royal Tech, Chenab Engineering, FDI Industries, Rubatech, Landhi Engineering, Millat Tractors. From Pakistan more than 50 Auto Parts' Importers and member of Pakistan Auto Spare Parts Importers & Dealers Association (PASPIDA) visits Automechanika Frankfurt.

Calligraphy classes in full swing at PNCA

ISLAMABAD: Calligraphy classes is in full swing at Pakistan National Council of the arts (PNCA) under the supervision of instructor Shabbir Ahmad Zia. A large number of students had been registered to present their abilities in calligraphic art or other writing instruments and contemporary ideas related to the theme, said a press release issued here. A calligraphic student Faiza Hassan sharing her remarks about calligraphy said modern calligraphy ranged from functional inscriptions and designs to fine-art pieces. Classical calligraphy differed from type design and non-classical hand-lettering, though a calligrapher might practice both, she said. She said calligraphy continues to flourish in the forms of wedding invitations and event invitations, font design and typography, original hand-lettered logo design, religious art, announcements, graphic design and commissioned calligraphic art, cut stone inscriptions, and memorial documents. It was also used for props and moving images for film and television, and also for testimonials, she added. – APP

Govt notifies transfer, posting of officers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday notified transfer and posting of high rank officers. According to a notification issued by Establishment Division, NadeemAslam-Chaudhry, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Additional Secretary, Establishment Division is transferred and posted as Additional Secretary, Prime Minister's Office, with immediate effect and until further orders. While, Dr. Muhammad Shoaib Akbar, a BS-21 officer of Secretariat Group, presently posted as Senior Joint Secretary, Establishment Division is transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of the National School of Public Policy (NSPP), on deputation basis, initially for a period of three (03) years, on standard terms and conditions, with immediate effect and until further orders.

ICCI demands urgent power sector reforms

M Shakeel Munir said that the circular debt has more than doubled in the last four years exceeding Rs.2.4trl, which reflected the bad governance in the power sector

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Electricity plays a vital role in the economic development of a country, but rising circular debt, surging transmission & distribution losses and poor performance of power companies is taking a heavy toll on the business & economic activities in Pakistan. Therefore, the government should take urgent measures to bring drastic reforms in the power sector in order to reduce the production cost and promote ease of doing business. This was said by Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry in a statement. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that the circular debt has more than doubled in the last four years exceeding Rs.2.4 trillion, which reflected the bad governance in the power sector. This situation has increased the energy cost for domestic and commercial consumers as the electricity cost has gone up

by almost 100 percent over the last 4 years. He said that growing at the current rate, the circular debt is estimated to reach Rs.4 tril-

lion by 2025, which would badly affect the economic growth of the country. ICCI President said that according to a



research report of Pakistan Credit Rating Agency (PACRA), the average transmission and distribution losses of Discos and KE were recorded at 21 percent and 20 percent respectively in financial year 2020, which showed the poor performance of these companies as rising T&D losses are causing great financial losses to the national exchequer. He emphasized that the government should take urgent measures to control T&D losses and promote efficiency in the power companies to save the economy from further losses. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President and Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI stressed that the government should focus on reducing the commercial and technical losses of power companies, disconnect the power connections of those consumers who do not pay bills and upgrade the transmission & distribution infrastructure to reduce losses and facilitate the better growth of business and economic activities.

Govt may call elections

The Defence Minister and a senior PML N leader Khawaja Asif has hinted at elections in November this year. While talking to media he said government was seriously considering the proposal to call early elections. He also announced that appointment of the new army chief was in fact the reason the PTI government was sent packing. He said army was not happy the way Imran Khan had handled the issue of the appointment of the new army chief.

Khawaja Asif's statement may be based on facts and logic given the fact that the government, which is a mixture of so many parties, has not been able to live up to the expectations of the people. Masses were expecting a breather after the dismal performance of the PTI government. However the new set up failed to deliver the goods. It, in fact has earned a bad name for especially the PML N that is leading this coalition government. The way Imran Khan has started portraying the performance of the government of the day, it has indeed rung alarm bells within the ranks of the PML N and perhaps that is why the PML N supremo Mian Nawaz Sharif has summoned the Prime Minister and key cabinet minister to London for talks.

The inside sources claim Nawaz Sharif is likely to ask the Prime Minister to announce early elections. In this way they can effectively stop Imran Khan from making inroads in the general public. If the government continues to rule the country, it would lose public support because even miracles cannot set the house in order and the economic conditions would continue to deteriorate.

Khawaj Asif, when says that Imran Khan govt was removed because of the army chief appointment issue, he seeks to obviate the impression of US involvement in the PTI govt ouster. Ostensibly, the PTI will never accept this idea as it strongly believes that the US admin played an active role in removing its government.

The PTI long march that is expected to take place in this month is yet another factor that has shaken the powers that be. If it happens, it may be a violent exercise, keeping in view the charged mood of the PTI stalwarts. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the Establishment has established some links with the PTI leadership asking it to reconsider long march option. In return, it is ready to play a role for the holding of early elections. In the given circumstances early elections would be a feasible and plausible option for all stakeholders.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 308

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

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Car prices off the hook

By MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

The prices of cars being assembled in Pakistan have once again risen. The car models that were once a charm for the middle-class society of Pakistan, have become out-of-reach. One wonders how can a middle-class man earning an income that only suffices for his budget, not to mention the school fees of children, can afford a car that is worth Rs. 19 lakhs. These cars were once available at a price that appealed to the middle class. Perhaps the government should put a check on the pricing range offered by the automobile manufacturers. Indeed, transportation is a necessity one cannot ignore. While the people of Pakistan – especially those living in the metropolis – have been traveling in public buses, they are not convenient for families with more members and especially senior citizens. The application-based ride-hailing services are also popular but one has to wait for their booking as their demand has increased. In such times, people prefer traveling in their private car. There was once a time when compact vehicles were seen in every lane of Pakistan. The companies have upgraded such cars and added a hefty price tag to their new models. Their older versions are available at a relatively cheaper price but some have a dream of owning a brand-new car. For the common man, the public and private sectors must join forces to uplift and enhance the transport system of Karachi and other metropolis cities.

The Green Line and Orange Line bus system can be used as a case study with similar services being launched across cities covering major areas. If the public transport system is enhanced it will reduce the need to travel in cars – especially for those who commute to the office every day. It will also reduce the traffic on the roads.

No easy way out for Russia in Ukraine

Can Kasapoglu

Having failed in the hybrid attempt, the Russian military resorted to conventional operations, highlighting their lack of readiness for a large-scale, interstate war.

The Russian Aero-Space Forces could not establish air superiority over Ukraine, while its army suffered from ill-planned and ill-executed logistics. As capturing the Ukrainian capital became an unattainable objective, the Russian General Staff ordered the withdrawal from the northern parts of Ukraine to concentrate their efforts on the east

No, Muslims critical of Prevent are not 'enabling terrorism'

While the Ukrainian defence has disrupted Moscow's plans, it does not guarantee a return to the status quo ante.

Moscow's plan in Ukraine was centred on the flawed assumption that the circumstances that prevailed during the 2014 Crimean hybrid campaign were still in place. The war, in President Vladimir Putin's eyes, would be short. Besides, countries of the Euro-Atlantic were already divided; the French president had even declared NATO 'brain-dead'.

The Russian push for Ukraine, therefore, would have deepened those problematic divisions. With energy prices already on the higher side and given Europe's troublesome dependency on the Russian gas supply, securing another win for the 'Gerasimov Doctrine' should not have been a big issue. What the Russian military found in Ukraine, however, has been quite far from a blitz achievement. Moscow started the attack with a badly-calculated Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB). This was displayed first in the airborne troops' (VDV) botched raid onto Hostomel Airport at the outset of the war, expecting little, if any, Ukrainian resistance.

The plan was to take control of the facility, and use it to transport the elite units of the Russian military into Kiev to topple Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's administration. A pro-Russian regime would then have been imposed to manifest the 'historical unity of the Ukrainians and Russians' in the post-Soviet space, as Putin once envisaged. The Ukrainian military and people, however, showed unexpected resolve and resistance. Having failed in the hybrid attempt, the Russian military resorted to conventional operations, highlighting their lack of readiness for a large-scale, interstate war. The Russian Aero-Space Forces could not establish air superiority over Ukraine, while its army suffered from ill-planned and ill-executed logistics. As capturing the Ukrainian capital became an unattainable objective, the Russian General Staff ordered the withdrawal from the northern parts of Ukraine to concentrate their efforts on the east.

As the conflict progressed, the Russians had to learn from their intelligence mistakes in an even harder way. The Moskva missile cruiser, the flagship of Russia's Black Sea fleet, was sunk by Ukraine's Neptune anti-ship missiles.

The war as it is Ukraine's eastern frontier is now looming large with certain military-geostrategic parameters shaping the conflict: the topographic setting in the east, especially rural lowlands, priorities massive land-based attacks through artillery and multiple-launch rocket systems, as well as armoured warfare. Having seen the transfor-

mation of the conflict, Western military aid, too, has been keeping up with the new ballgame. Poland and Czechia have transferred Cold War-remnant T-72 tanks to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, capitalising on the Ukrainian personnel's familiarity with the platform. Other Western nations, especially the US, have boosted transferring artillery weaponry and supporting assets.

Yet, while a large-scale, successful counter-offensive on the part of Ukraine is not impossible, it is easier said than done due to two major caveats. The first boils down to the foundations of operational planning. So far, the Ukrainian defence has been very successful in bleeding the Russian war party in the country's depth, especially through mobile defence conducted by tactical units in urban and suburban areas. The Ukrainian troops have also been sensationally taking out Putin's generals and high-ranking officers.

In return, the Russian military has suffered from high attrition rates in material and personnel, and lost around 20 percent of their frontline main battle tank arsenal.

However, one should not confuse Ukraine's successful mobile defence conduct producing an asymmetric impact on the battleground with a potent counteroffensive for recapturing, and more importantly, holding territory.

The second is about the nature of defence assistance programmes and efficiency cycles. Not all military aid programmes are digested equally on the receivers' end. Equipping the Ukrainian Territorial Defence Forces with man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) has built dangerous capabilities against Russian armour and aircraft flying at low altitudes. Yet, capitalising on the incoming T-72 battle tanks, and preparing large combat formations to match the Russian capacity will not be as easy or fast.

What next? The southern sector appears to be reaching the limits of what the Russian military can secure. The presence, in particular, of coastal anti-ship missiles deterrents (both Ukraine's Neptunes and Britain's plans to deliver Brimstones) has rendered an amphibious landing to Odessa shores extremely dangerous. The Armed Forces of Ukraine have also been fighting well in Mykolaiiv, which halted the Russian push from Kherson. Russia can devastate Odessa with missiles, but Russian boots on the ground is a low probability, at least for now.

Courtesy: TRT World

Anti-Palestinian racism is widespread and must be tackled

Chris Doyle

It situates anti-Palestinian racism as a form of anti-Arab racism. The challenge here is that the wider form of racism is totally ignored as well. As much as discrimination against Palestinians needs addressing, at some point anti-Arab racism must be too. You cannot really deal with one and not the other

One of the clearest imbalances in the debate surrounding Israel and Palestine is that, while the issue of anti-Jewish prejudice, anti-Semitism, gets full attention, anti-Palestinian racism is just ignored. Worse, it is not even acknowledged as an issue. You will barely find any references to this in Western political speeches or media output, just as any references to the broader and also widespread issue of anti-Arab racism is absent.

This needs to be addressed. A step in the right direction would be to agree on a proper description of anti-Palestinian racism. Stepping forward to advance this, the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association has published a telling report into anti-Palestinian racism, including how to describe and frame it. The description drawn up through a consultative process and survey is a decent attempt to encapsulate the challenge but, as ever, may be improved over time and further consultation. It certainly represents a building block for a wider global discussion.

It situates anti-Palestinian racism as a form of anti-Arab racism. The challenge here is that the wider form of racism is totally ignored as well. As much as discrimination against Palestinians needs addressing, at some point anti-Arab racism must be too. You cannot really deal with one and not the other.

Have Palestinians been silenced? Do they endure stereotypes? Have they been dehumanized? The answer to all these questions is unequivocally yes.

Many even today deny Palestinians exist as a people. Former US House of Representatives Speaker Newt Gingrich described Palestinians as an "invented people" – a comment that did no political harm to him whatsoever. All Palestinians are frequently presented as being intrinsically violent and anti-Jewish as opposed to being against their oppressor, with the dehumanization, particularly in Israel, at dangerous levels. One Israeli commentator referred to "the culture of death and evil which saturates dominant aspects of Palestinian life today."

Another classic is blaming the oppressed for the actions of the oppressor, the occupied for the crimes of the occupier. Palestinians are somehow meant to be responsible for the security of the occupier. Many politicians refer to Israelis' right to live in peace and security, yet do not extend that right to Palestinians, who have been living under military occupation for 55 years.

Take Jared Kushner, who was tasked with devising the Trump peace plan, on the issue of Palestinian rights. He was clear: "I do think they should have self-determination." But he added that the Palestinians were not yet capable of governing themselves. This is a classic racist trope depicting the natives as backward and useless, typically used to justify colonialism and the superiority of the oppressor over the oppressed.

The Arab Canadian Lawyers Association report emphasizes that anti-Palestinian racism "is experienced by: Palestinians; those perceived to be Palestinians or

inherently pro-Palestinian; and non-Palestinians who express support for Palestinian rights." One British member of Parliament referred to pro-Palestinian demonstrators as "primitives." Imagine if he had described anti-Palestinian protesters as such (my preference is to use the term anti-Palestinian rather than pro-Israel in cases where the overwhelming motivation is not about helping Israel but perpetuating the oppression and subjugation of Palestinians). The MP was not in any way reprimanded. Pro-Palestinian activists are typically maligned as terrorist sympathizers.

Many Palestinians also report that this affects them in their personal lives. They have found discrimination in terms

of getting jobs, posts at university or sponsorship for projects.

It is no shock to discover that successive Israeli governments have indulged in anti-Palestinian racism on a daily basis. Nakba denial is standard for starters. Palestinians in Gaza get collectively punished for the crimes of Hamas due to the way they are systematically dehumanized in the Israeli media. There is also the appropriation of Palestinian culture and heritage.

The global human rights community has reached a consensus that Israel is perpetrating the crime of apartheid against Palestinians. According to Amnesty International, Israel has established "a system which is designed to privilege Jewish Israelis at the expense of Palestinians." In short, from the Mediterranean to the River Jordan, Israeli Jews have superior rights to any Palestinian, whether they are citizens of Israel or live in the occupied West Bank or under siege in the Gaza Strip.

The detailed human rights and legal reporting into this should have merited a thorough political discussion. What occurred was a vile shoot-the-messenger hate campaign smearing the human rights groups without engaging with the substance. Anti-Palestinian groups just dismissed these reports as lies. Many who have raised the crime of apartheid are accused of anti-Semitism.

What this means is that European and Western politicians are not concerned at this situation of systematic oppression against Palestinians. Almost universally, these same politicians have, in the case of Ukraine, backed the politics and positions Palestinians have been calling for over decades, including an end to occupation and accountability for Israeli crimes. Boycotts, divestment and sanctions are lauded and encouraged to tackle Russian crimes but criminalized in the case of Israeli crimes. If you apply the Arab Canadian Lawyers Association's description of anti-Palestinian racism to many Western government statements, press releases and positions, it would be alarming. Perhaps more alarming is what is not said – the absence of criticism and accountability for Israeli actions when oppressing Palestinians.

Yet, as the report argues, any definition should not be weaponized, as definitions of anti-Semitism have all too often been used to suppress debate on Israel-Palestine. Healthy debate is vital. Some comments on Palestinians may well be motivated by politics, not racism, or might be offensive or ill-considered but not racist. It is also no excuse for people to make anti-Semitic comments.

This report should be embraced. The issue must be explored, the bigotry recognized. Palestinians and indeed all Arabs must be given the confidence to report, document and speak about the racism and discrimination they suffer.

Palestinians talk about the racism they suffer. The concern is why nobody else does. The refusal to do so is further evidence if any were needed of just how widespread the issue is.

Courtesy: Arab News

Why Twitter matters and what Musk's buyout might mean

Kerry Boyd Anderson

There are Twitter communities focused on the military, academia, ideologies, religion, health, science, art and much more. It has become a place where people – particularly elites – workshop ideas with other people in their online communities. Those conversations often expand into real life, contributing to policies, research, activism and more

Elon Musk's plan to purchase Twitter and take the company private has prompted speculation about the social media platform's future. Musk has offered \$44 billion for Twitter, raising questions about the company's value and sparking concerns that he will roll back content moderation policies. A fundamental question underlies the controversy that often surrounds the platform, especially now: Does Twitter matter?

There are good reasons to question the social media site's importance. Twitter's first quarter

net income for 2022 was \$513 million, according to its latest report, but the company has mostly been unprofitable over the last decade. It has far fewer users globally than platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. Some social media analysts and political commentators have argued that "Twitter isn't real life," noting that its user base is not representative of broader publics. For example, in the US, Twitter users are more likely to be young, Democratic and highly educated and wealthier than the general population. Among Democrats, Twitter users are much more likely to be progressive than the broader Democratic electorate. Globally, Twitter users are likely to be under 50 and particularly to be in the 25 to 34 age range.

These arguments, however, often miss the more important points. While it is true that Twitter is not fully representative of the broader population, critics often exaggerate the differences. Polling by the Pew Research Center has found that, in the US, the gender and ethnic or racial composition of Twitter users very closely mirrors the broader population. While there is a discernible lean toward Democrats, the partisan divide among Twitter users is much smaller than on many issues today, where there are often enormous partisan gaps in polls.

Twitter is a relatively stronger force in some countries than in others, which affects its influence in specific states. Data from Hootsuite, based on Twitter company reports, finds that 80 percent of Twitter's monetizable daily active users – one way to measure users – are located outside of the US. Twitter is particularly popular in countries such as Japan, the UK, Saudi Arabia and Brazil. Globally, Twitter users skew relatively young (under 50) and a majority are male.

Numbers alone are useful for advertising but provide very limited insight into a platform's overall influence. Twitter's impact extends far beyond its actual user numbers. Indeed, as Pew noted, a

rather small group of Twitter users are very active on the site – data from 2019 found that 10 percent of US adult users produced 80 percent of US tweets. Twitter's power lies in the highly engaged, influential people who use it; their numbers are relatively small, but their social and political footprint is large.

Twitter is most obviously influential in politics. The platform is particularly useful for activists. It is a helpful tool for Black activists in the US. Donald Trump very effectively used Twitter in his political rise and election as president; since losing his Twitter account, he has struggled to find another megaphone with the same reach. Many other politicians in a range of countries use Twitter to communicate their messages, interact with followers and attack rivals.

Twitter's reach extends far beyond social media. Many mainstream and other media outlets pick up conversations and statements from Twitter and integrate that information into their broader reporting. For example, Trump's Twitter audience was limited, but when Fox News picked up his statements from the site, it amplified his Twitter messaging to a much wider audience. Journalists are often heavy users themselves. They can post about breaking news faster than they can produce a fully edited article or video and can use Twitter to follow statements and messages from politicians, governments, organizations, activists, on-the-ground witnesses and more. In the war in Ukraine, for example, Ukrainians have used Twitter to tell the world about their experiences and internet sleuths have used this information to gather war crimes evidence. With its simple and immediate posting, Twitter is also useful for emergency responses. Whether Twitter's role in the world is more positive or more negative, it clearly matters. What happens on Twitter affects the real world in many ways – far more than its user numbers alone suggest. Therefore, Musk's purchase of the platform and his plans for change matter too. The biggest problem might simply be concentrating so much power in the hands of one owner.

Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

China a key partner on all fronts: FM

FROM PAGE 01

counterpart for China's firm support to Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, independence and national development, and reaffirmed Pakistan's full support to China on all issues of its core interest.

Foreign Minister underscored his determination to inject fresh momentum in the bilateral strategic cooperative partnership and add new avenues to practical cooperation. The Foreign Minister appreciated the transformational impact of CPEC on Pakistan's infrastructure, energy, industrialization, socio-economic development and improvement in livelihoods of the people. He underlined that Pakistan was committed to high quality development of CPEC and looked forward to fast-tracking key projects and accelerating industrial relocation to Pakistan, especially in CPEC SEZs.

Condemning the terrorist attack in Karachi University in which three Chinese teachers lost their lives, the Foreign Minister underlined Pakistan's firm resolve to apprehend the perpetrators and bring them to justice. He reiterated that Pakistan attached high importance to safety and security of Chinese projects, nationals and institutions in Pakistan.

Won't let 'lies' affect ties with Pakistan: US

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diplomatic relation between Pakistan and [the] US or — or it doesn't matter?" a reporter asked Price. In response, Price said: "We are not going to let propaganda, misinformation, and disinformation — lies — get in the way of any bilateral relationship we have, including with the bilateral relationship we have with Pakistan, one we value." Imran, who was voted out of the top office last month via a no-confidence vote, alleges the move was masterminded by the US through the help of local collaborators over his pursuance of an independent foreign policy.

On March 27, days before his ouster, the former PM had brandished a letter at a rally in Islamabad, claiming it contained evidence of a "foreign conspiracy" hatched to topple his government. Imran had kept a mum about the contents of the letter when he first mentioned it, however, he spilled the beans days later by naming the US when the exit of the government appeared imminent.

ECP rejects PTI...

FROM PAGE 01

member of the PTI and he never intended to leave the former ruling party. Alam did not cast his vote in the no-confidence motion against then prime minister" The lawyer said that Article 63-A could not be used against his client. Earlier this week, the dissident members had submitted their response to the ECP and termed the reference baseless and false as they were still part of the former ruling party and there was no violation of Article 63-A.

Fawad says moving...

FROM PAGE 01

personality has lost his trust in him. The former information minister said that ECP is incomplete as the members from Punjab and KP are not there. Earlier, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan accused Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja of being a Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) agent. While addressing PTI Parliamentarians in Peshawar, former prime minister Imran Khan accused the ECP CEC of being "partisan and dishonest" and working for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). PTI chairman also demanded Sikander Sultan Raja to immediately step down as ECP chief.

Air Chief Zaheer Sidhu visits PAF Air War College Institute

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force visited PAF Air War College Institute, Faisal today. On his arrival, he was received by Air Vice Marshal Hussain Ahmed Siddiqui, President Air War College Institute. The Chief Guest congratulated the AWCI team for transforming the AWCI into an institute of the highest caliber capable of meeting the contemporary challenges.

Addressing the Air War Course participants, CAS paid rich tribute to the role and sacrifices of Pakistan Armed Forces for the defence and security of motherland. The Air Chief said, "The world is undergoing unprecedented transformation in this era of technological advancement and global security environment which has necessitated aligning our objectives to meet modern challenges. He further stated that we must work hard to keep abreast of latest developments in perpetual cyber warfare and info ops-domains. The Air Chief urged the course participants to put in their best for the achievement of PAF vision to be, "A dynamic and resilient aerospace force capable



of creating decisive effects across domains in ever evolving operational environment."

PAF Air War College Institute is the prestigious institution of Pakistan Air Force, where mid level officers of Pakistan Armed Forces

and friendly countries are prepared for assumption of key Command and Staff appointments. The course participants are exposed to over a hundred subject matter experts including: Civil & Military Professionals, Dip-

lomats, Scholars/ Academicians, Lawyers, Industrialists, Scientists, Economists and Media Personnel. Exclusive Interaction with foreign faculty and strategists is also ensured to provide depth and academic rigor to the course.

Barcelona win overshadowed by Araujo injury

MADRID: Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored twice as Barcelona tightened their grip on second place in La Liga on Tuesday with a 3-1 win at home to Celta Vigo. But Barca's victory was overshadowed by a nasty head injury to defender Ronald Araujo, who had to be taken away in an ambulance in the 64th minute of the match. Araujo was lifted into the ambulance on a stretcher, wearing a neck brace. Barcelona confirmed the 23-year-old "suffered a concussion and has been taken to the hospital to undergo further testing". After the game, Barca coach Xavi Hernandez said: "The doctor has told us he is conscious. He will spend the night in hospital but he is out of danger. "The doctor said we shouldn't worry, that he will spend the night in hospital as a precaution, nothing more." Araujo's injury came after he and Gavi banged heads challenging for the same ball. Araujo stumbled on for a few seconds before dropping to

the floor as a concerned Iago Aspas and Eric Garcia called urgently for the medics. The Uruguayan was put into the recovery position and after a few minutes, he was lifted into an ambulance that had driven onto the pitch.

Aubameyang's double either side of half-time came after Memphis Depay had opened the scoring at Camp Nou. Celta pulled one back through Aspas but any hopes of a comeback were dashed when Jeison Murillo was sent off just before the hour. "We were effective but we didn't play well," said Xavi. "It was simpler against 10 men but we struggled against 11." Barca move seven points ahead of Sevilla and eight in front of Atletico Madrid, with Sevilla and Atletico playing each other at the Wanda Metropolitan on Sunday. Real Madrid, who have already been crowned champions, sit nine points clear of Xavi Hernandez's side at the top of the table, with a game in hand. — APP

We will never force Syrian refugees to leave Turkey

Since 2016, the Turkish military also cleared much of the area of terrorist groups to make it safe for resettlement

ANKARA: Turkey will never push Syrian refugees to go back to their countries, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Wednesday. Addressing the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party) meeting in the capital Ankara, the president slammed the opposition parties' recent calls to send refugees and migrants back. "As long as we are in power, you will not be able to send these brothers back from this country," he said. "When these brothers of ours want to return on their own initiative, they will return anyway," he said, adding "but we will never hand them over to the enemy at gunpoint."

Those who fled persecution and war in Iraq, Syria, or elsewhere and sought protection in our country are guests, Erdogan said. If they want to return voluntarily, they can return, otherwise, our doors will remain open to refugees, he added. "Turkey will not push them into the arms of murderers," Erdogan said, adding that hosting those who need protection is part of Turkish tradition.

Erdogan recently announced a new plan in which hundreds of thousands of homes will be built in opposition-held northern Syria, along with schools,



hospitals, and other needed institutions. Some 4 million Syrian refugees currently live in Turkey, more than any country in the world, and Erdogan said he expected the plan would draw some 1 million of them to voluntarily return to Syria to resettle. Since 2016, the Turkish military also cleared much of the area of terrorist groups to make it safe for resettlement. The president's words come amid increasingly hostile sentiment

toward refugees in the country, fuelled by some parties and figures. Kemal Kicdarolu, the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) chairperson, and other politicians had announced they would send back Syrian refugees if they win next year's presidential and parliamentary elections. However, the debate on migrants living in Turkey is mainly fuelled by the small far-right Victory Party (ZP). — Agencies

Rafael Nadal beats Isner in Italian Open

SPORTS DESK

ROME: Rafael Nadal maintained his perfect record of never losing back-to-back matches on clay with victory over John Isner at the Italian Open.

The Spaniard, beaten by Carlos Alcaraz in last week's Madrid Open quarter-finals, returned to his favourite surface with a 6-3 6-1 win over Isner. The victory put Nadal into the third round in Rome and got his preparations for his pursuit of a record-extending 14th French Open title back on track. He faces Denis Shapovalov next.

Third seed Nadal, who had received a first-round bye, was given a stern test in the seventh game of the first set against his American opponent.

But he saved two break points and capitalised on Isner's disappointment over the missed chances by stringing together a run of five games in a row to go a set and a break up. The 10-

time champion did not look back, with big-serving Isner managing only one hold during the rest of the match, and Nadal eventually took victory with a huge forehand down the line.

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through to another encounter with Canadian world number 16 Shapovalov, against whom he saved two match points at this event last year. "I know how dangerous he is," Nadal, 35, told Amazon Prime, when asked about his next opponent. "I need to play better than today."

Earlier, second seed Alexander Zverev of Germany advanced to the third round with a 7-6 (8-6) 6-3 win over Argentina's Sebastian Baez.

Among the other players in action later on Wednesday is British number one Cameron Norrie, who faces Croatian world number 204 US Open champion Marin Cilic.

The Masters 1000 event in Rome finishes on Sunday, a week before the French Open clay-court Grand Slam begins at Roland Garros.

UEFA unveil Champions League revamp

VIENNA: The European Champions League will see an increase of four teams to 36 and the present group stage replaced by one single league from the 2024/25 season, UEFA said on Tuesday.

The revamp of European football's premier club competition will see each team play eight league games — four home and four away — as opposed to six in the group stage. The top eight sides in the league will qualify automatically for the knockout stage, while the teams finishing in ninth to 24th place will compete in a two-legged play-off to secure their path to the last 16 of the competition.

"We are convinced that the format chosen strikes the right balance and that it will improve the competitive balance and generate solid revenues that can be distributed to clubs, leagues and into grassroots football across our continent," said UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin.

Ceferin and UEFA will be hoping the reforms — passed unanimously by their executive board — will kill off once and for all any thought of the rebel Super League making a reappearance. Twelve of Europe's biggest clubs signed up to the proposed new competition last April but it collapsed within days following a fierce backlash from their own players and fans, as well as governments and football's governing bodies. Nine clubs distanced themselves from the project but Real Madrid, Barcelona and Juventus remain on board with the concept. UEFA had stepped back after consulting with various parties — including supporters — from having 10 league matches and allocating two of the four new places to teams based on club coefficient.

The four places will go to the club ranked third in the championship of the association in fifth position in the UEFA national association ranking. Another will be awarded to a domestic champion by extending from four to five the number of clubs qualifying via the so-called 'Champions Path'. — APP

Qureshi slams decision to resume trade with India

FROM PAGE 01

appointment of 15 trade officers in Pakistan's High Commission in New Delhi.

He also reminded the newly formed government that when the same subject had been raised at the cabinet meeting during the PTI government, the cabinet had rejected the idea.

"This was despite the fact that if resumed, trade between the two countries would have benefited Pakistan," he said, and added, "You should also keep this thing in mind that India had snatched the special status from Kashmir on August 5, 2019 in blatant violation of the United Nations' resolutions. "Even today, the staff strength in our high commission in New Delhi is half," he said, and expressed the surprise that very party, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), which owed its existence to the Kashmir issue, was not silent on the development. Bilawal Bhutto is also silent on this decision. Have you [Bilawal] consulted the Azad Kashmir government on this decision? You have hurt the feelings of the oppressed people in Kashmir and the government should reconsider this decision. Azad Kashmir and Occupied Kashmir will also react to your decision. If India had reduced oppression in Kashmir, then there is another matter. Has the status of Kashmir been restored there? No, has India been repressed there? No, if not then this decision should be reversed," Shah Mehmood said. "Truth of the matter is that you have injured the feelings of people of the Indian occupied Kashmir," the former foreign minister said, and demanded the government to immediately take back its decision.

La Liga post losses of 892m

MADRID: La Liga posted losses of 892 million euros for the pandemic-hit 2020-21 season, with Barcelona accounting for more than half of the shortfall, according to figures announced by the Spanish league on Tuesday. Barca were responsible for 56 per cent of La Liga's net pre-tax losses during that season as Spanish clubs suffered the financial consequences of empty stadiums and reduced matchday income. Less transfer activity, compressed television schedules and a drop-off in commercial income also had a significant impact, the league said. La Liga clubs posted total revenues of 3.818 billion euros (4,022 billion dollars) for 2020/21, which represented a 24.1 per cent decrease on the 2019/20 season, which was also hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, but only in the last few months. Matchday income and player sales were down 53 per cent and 52 per cent respectively in 2020/21. It is the first time La Liga has made a loss since 2012 but the league expects to recover completely in the next two seasons. "The high financial solvency and responsibility of most clubs has helped Spanish professional football overcome this crisis," the league said in a statement. "A strong recovery is expected in the 2021/22 season while in 2023/24 full normality should be achieved."

La Liga's losses were exacerbated by Barcelona's dreadful financial situation, which led to the resignation of the club's president Josep Maria Bartomeu in October 2020 and Lionel Messi leaving for free in August last year. Bartomeu's successor, Joan Laporta, said last September the club was 1.35 billion euros in debt and that salaries represented 103 per cent of its total income. Barca have so far resisted signing up to the deal agreed by La Liga with private equity fund CVC, which will invest almost 2 billion euros in Spanish football and its clubs, in return for an 8.2 per cent share in a company that will manage the league's broadcasting rights for the next 50 years. Five clubs have rejected the deal, including Barcelona and Real Madrid, who remain committed to launching a European Super League because of the potential financial rewards. La Liga said its losses in 2020/21 represented a "softer reduction in relative terms than what was experienced by European football as a whole". — APP

10m Afghan children on brink of starvation

I want to sell my kidney. Our economic situation is so bad that I am ready to sell one of my children for 150,000 Afghanis

KABUL: Around 9.6 million children in Afghanistan have been going hungry daily amid the country's economic collapse, worsening impact of the Ukraine conflict on staple foods and ongoing drought, according to a recent report published by NGO, Save the Children.

The war-torn country is experiencing the worst hunger crisis in its history, and the NGO has called for "immediate food assistance" to save lives in the short term. "The international community must address both the gap in funds and Afghanistan's economic collapse by identifying ways to increase liquidity in the country's economy. Until the economic crisis is addressed, and rising poverty stemmed, children will continue to face catastrophic levels of hunger. Aid alone cannot save their lives," said Athena Rayburn, Save the Children's Director of Advocacy, Communications and Media.

26-year-old Maryam has five children and lives in Faryab Province in Afghanistan, where many families subsist on only one

meal a day. Her husband is in Iran trying to find work so he can send money back to his family. "I am worried about my children," Maryam told Save the Children. "I can only borrow cash and buy them food but mostly I don't have sufficient food for them. Sometimes we have food to eat and some days we don't."

However, the report underlined that aid alone is not enough to tackle the crisis. Despite the significant amount of food aid distributed to Afghan families in recent months, 19.7 million children and adults, nearly half of the population, need urgent support to survive. According to Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), about 6.6 million people are classified in Emergency (IPC Phase 4), characterised by large food gaps and/or employing emergency coping strategies to access food, while 20,000 people are considered to be in Catastrophe (Phase 5) in this regard.

After the Taliban took over the control of the country last August, the US froze nearly \$10 billion of Afghan assets and

suspended development assistance to the Taliban administration, a move that deepened the country's macroeconomic instability and sent its economy into a downwards spiral.

Typically having a deficit in cereal production against consumption requirements and relying on imports to meet its food demands, Afghanistan has also suffered the consequences of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the world's two chief cereal exporters.

The ongoing conflict has raised global food prices, which placed pressure on countries in the region supplying wheat to Afghanistan to place export bans on food, giving priority to their respective domestic consumption.

The combination of rising food prices and reduced purchasing power of Afghans has led to acute food insecurity across the country. This year, "the terms of trade of casual labor against wheat prices have fallen by 35 percent compared with June 2021," the IPC report said. Drought is another reason for

the ongoing crisis, as Afghans rely heavily on agricultural production.

Wheat cultivation has reduced between seven to 13 percent compared to the long-term average, due to below-average cumulative precipitation during the wet season and high agriculture input costs such as seed and fertilisers. Amid these dire circumstances, Afghan parents are forced to take desperate measures to feed their families.

For example, some families have sold their children and their kidneys to meet basic food needs. A local resident, 38-year-old Abdulkadir, said he only drank tea and ate dry bread. He said he has no money to go to the hospital. "I went to the hospital to sell one of my kidneys for 150,000 Afghanis (around \$1,457). The doctors told me that if I had surgery and had my kidney removed, I would die. However, I want to sell my kidney. Our economic situation is so bad that I am ready to sell one of my children for 150,000 Afghanis. So I want to save other members of my family," Abdulkadir said.

Briefs

Bill Gates tests positive for Covid-19



WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Bill Gates, co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, announced Tuesday that he has tested positive for COVID-19. "I'm experiencing mild symptoms and am following the experts' advice by isolating until I'm healthy again. I'm fortunate to be vaccinated and boosted and have access to testing and great medical care," Gates said on Twitter.

He said the charitable Gates Foundation will continue working with its partners and do all it can "to ensure none of us have to deal with a pandemic again." Gates turned his fortune from software firm Microsoft into a diversified fortune, including investments in zero-carbon energy. His current real-time net worth is \$126.6 billion according to Forbes.

Gates, who cofounded Microsoft with Paul Allen in 1975, stepped down from Microsoft's board as of March 2020 owning about 1% of the software and computing company's shares. To date, Gates has donated an estimated \$35.8 billion worth of Microsoft stock to the Gates Foundation.

Deadly suicide attack targets Somali capital

MOGADISHU: At least four people have been killed by a suicide explosion that targeted a security checkpoint near the Aden Adde International Airport in Somalia's capital Mogadishu. The blast happened on Wednesday as presidential candidates were heading into the heavily fortified airport area to address lawmakers ahead of Sunday's vote for president, Somali police said.

"I saw four people dead at the scene. Two of them were government soldiers who died immediately after the attack," said police officer Ali Hassan. A number of wounded people were taken away in an ambulance, according to witness Hamdi Nur. There were no details on the other casualties.

Somalia's Al Shabab militant group claimed responsibility for the attack, which destroyed a number of small businesses along the street. Al Shabab opposes Somalia's federal government and frequently stages lethal attacks in Mogadishu and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa nation. In addition to Somalia, the group has also launched deadly attacks in the wider region. Wednesday's attack comes as the Horn of Africa country is preparing to hold long-delayed presidential polls, well over a year behind schedule due to deadly violence and a power struggle between President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed and Prime Minister Mohamed Hussein Roble. — Agencies

Death toll from Cuba hotel blast rises to 43

HAVANA: Three more bodies have been pulled from the rubble of a Havana hotel that was destroyed days earlier in an explosion, taking the death toll to 43. The ministry of health said on Tuesday another 54 people were wounded and 17 of those are receiving hospital treatment. The latest confirmed deaths included a 77-year-old woman and a popular local councilor.

Juan Carlos Diaz, 55, was held in high regard by local residents for his efforts to improve their lives. "We felt everyone's pain but especially his because he worked as a delegate in the moments that were necessary," Havana resident Lazara Phinney told the AFP news agency. A third body recovered later on Tuesday was still in the process of being identified, authorities said.

The luxury Saratoga hotel in the old quarter of Havana was destroyed on Friday morning, seemingly due to a gas leak. — Agencies

Trade between Pakistan and Belarus is unreal, says FPCCI

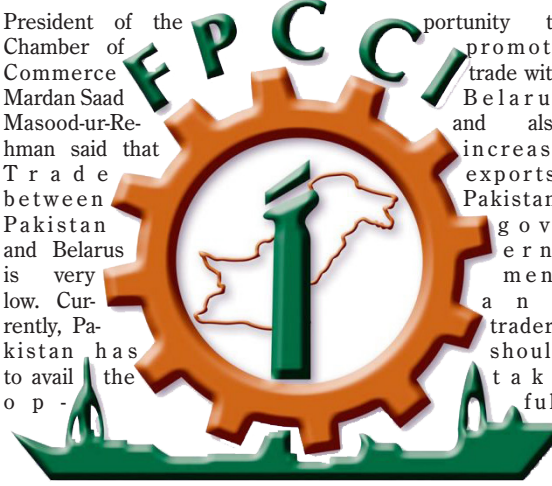
Pakistani traders sell goods to Afghani traders who further sell those goods to Central Asian and European countries. It is a alarming situation that there are no records of our export to countries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting of the Pakistan Belarusian Business Council was held yesterday under the Chairmanship of Saad Masood-ur-Rehman, Chairman, FPCCI Pakistan Belarusian Business Council at the FPCCI Capital Office Islamabad. The meeting was attended by FPCCI Vice Presidents Umar Masood-ur-Rehman, Haji Jamaluddin, Skardu Chamber President Arif

Malik, Mardan Chamber Senior Vice President Muhammad Fayyaz, Member Amin Butt and FPCCI Senior Vice President Muhammad Sulaiman Chawla. Shehryar Ali, Haroons and various members also participated via video link. Speaking at the meeting, Vice President and Chairman of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Umar Masood-ur-Rehman, Vice President Haji Jamaluddin, Chairman of the Belarus Pakistan Business Council and

President of the Chamber of Commerce Mardan Saad Masood-ur-Rehman said that Trade between Pakistan and Belarus is very low. Currently, Pakistan has to avail the opportunity to promote trade with Belarus and also increase exports, Pakistani government and traders should take full



advantage of the cooperation of Belarusian Embassy in Pakistan. Umar Masood-ur-Rehman, Haji Jamal-ud-Din and Saad Masood-ur-Rehman condemn that Pakistan's trade with Central Asian and European countries takes place through Afghanistan. Rice, canoes and other goods are passing through Afghanistan. Pakistani traders sell goods to Afghani traders who further sell those goods to Central Asian and European countries. "It is a alarming situation that there are no records of our export to countries.

He further stated that if Afghanistan transit trade and banking channels has given to Pakistani traders then our trade and exports both will be increase and accordingly we will avail the direct benefits of trade and exports with Central Asian and European countries. He also said that a large trade delegation is visiting Belarus to promote trade between Pakistan and Belarus and it will bring closer the business communities of both the countries.

Turkey to co-produce its Anka drones with Kazakhstan

ANKARA: Turkey and Kazakhstan are set to start co-producing drones that were sold to the Central Asian just last year, a statement said Wednesday. Anka, an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), will be jointly produced by Turkish and Kazakh experts, according to a statement by the Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI). The drones will be manufactured at a facility soon to be established in Kazakhstan, it said. The company signed a memorandum of understanding with state-owned Kazakhstan Engineering on the transfer of technology, including maintenance and repair. The latest development will make Kazakhstan the first Anka production base outside of Turkey.

"Thanks to this agreement, we will contribute to the strengthening of our commercial and friendship ties with the friendly and brotherly country of Kazakhstan," said TAI General Manager Temel Kotil. Kazakhstan was reported in November to have bought three units of the medium-altitude, long-endurance (MALE) Anka drones in a deal that followed an agreement in October. The two countries back in May signed a military cooperation agreement, foreseeing sharing of tactical and experience using reconnaissance and attack unmanned aerial vehicles.

Tunisia became the first buyer of TAI's drone. It was reported in December to have signed a contract to buy three Anka UAVs in a deal worth around \$80 million. Anka made its maiden flight in December of 2010. A mass production agreement for the armed version of the drone, Anka-S, was signed in October 2013 and entered the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) inventory in 2017. — Agencies

Iran arrests two European nationals for 'fomenting chaos'

TEHRAN: Iran has arrested two European nationals for allegedly "fomenting chaos and social disorder," without revealing their nationalities. In a statement on Wednesday, the Intelligence Ministry said the detainees had been sent by "foreign conspirators" to carry out destabilizing activities in the country. The two arrested men, it said, had "expertise in creating riots and instability" and had previously "trained local agents" in several countries over the years, without divulging further details. The ministry said it will soon disclose the audio and video documents related to the activities of the two individuals. The development comes amid growing tensions between Iran and some European countries such as Sweden and Belgium over arrests and jailing of Iranian diplomats, which had prompted Sweden recently to issue an advisory to its citizens against traveling to Iran. — Agencies

Hamis condemns killing of journalist by Israel

GAZA: Head of Hamas's political bureau Ismail Haniyeh phoned on Wednesday manager of Al Jazeera office in Palestine Walid al-Omari and offered his deep condolences over the martyrdom of correspondent Shireen Abu Akleh. In press remarks today, Haniyeh described Abu Akleh as "the martyr who witnessed the most atrocious occupation in contemporary history." He added that the name of Abu Akleh would be engraved on the Palestinian people's memory until the removal of the Israeli occupation from the land of Palestine. — APP

Gansu Construction started operation in North Nazimabad / Korangi

KARACHI: China's Gansu Construction Heavy Industry Technology Pakistan, has launched Front End Collection (FEC) Operation in two different zones of Karachi, the largest city and business hub of Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Wednesday. Making Karachi "Clean and Green Karachi", a new front end collection and disposal of waste in North Nazimabad in District Central and Korangi (Model and Landhi) zones has been introduced by Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) through Gansu Construction Heavy Industry Technology Pakistan. "Karachi's garbage will

now be clean; the work has kicked off today. By the end of July, other zones of central Karachi will be reached and proper operation will be kicked off," said Nasir Hussain Shah, Provincial Minister of Sindh for Local Government, at the inaugural ceremony of FEC Operation. Murtaza Wahab Siddiqui, Administrator Karachi, appreciated the service of Gansu Construction and said that besides a clean and green Karachi, Sindh is going to be the first province of the country to generate electricity from the waste. CEO Gansu Construction Mr. Liu Tao said that after north Nazimabad and Lan-

dhi zones, they will extend their operation to other parts of Karachi city. "We will ensure quality work for the satisfaction of the population in these areas," he said. Gansu Construction has already started operations in different union councils of and main roads of Korangi, Karachi. The company is using mechanical sweeping machines on roads to clear the garbage, dense dust and mud from arterial and sub-arterial roads. As per the directives of SSWMB, the GANSU Construction has also set up the collection of garbage from door to door in the Korangi Zone. — Agencies

Bahraini, Moroccan FM's hold talks

RABAT: Morocco's Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita held talks in Marrakech with his Bahraini counterpart, Abdullahi al-Zayani, on the sidelines of the ministerial meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS. The two ministers expressed pride in the cooperation between Rabat and Manama. Bourita reiterated Morocco's firm stance, under the leadership of King Mohammed VI, in supporting Bahrain to address any foreign intervention in its internal affairs or attempts to undermine its security, stability and national unity. Zayani reiterated Bahrain's recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, which culminated in the opening of a general consulate in the Western Sahara city of Laayoune on December 14, 2020. In a joint statement following their meeting, the two ministers underscored the importance of holding the fifth session of the Moroccan-Bahraini High Joint Commission later this year. Major public sector and investment institutions will take part in the session, which will focus on priority strategic sectors and target implementable projects that have a clear impact on the development and prosperity process in the two countries. Bourita and Zayani expressed their satisfaction with the level of ongoing preparations for holding the session, during which 11 cooperation agreements will be signed covering vital sectors, such as oil, gas, renewable energy, investment and social insurance. — Agencies

Yoon Suk calls security situation 'tough'



SEOUL: The South Korean president on Wednesday said the security situation in the region is "tough" after reports of North Korea resuming its nuclear program, local media reported. Speaking during his first meeting with senior presidential secretaries, Yoon Suk-yeol called for close monitoring of the situation. "The security situation is tough. Foreign countries are worried, and there's talk of a resumption of nuclear tests, so I think you will have to closely monitor the effects not only on security but also on other areas of state affairs in case such a situation arises and make preparations," Yonhap News Agency quoted Yoon as saying. Yoon took oath as the new president of the country on Tuesday at a time when South Korea is facing tough economic and security challenges. His statement came amid growing tensions and reports that the North could move for another nuclear test after numerous missile drills, including an intercontinental ballistic missile this year. — Agencies

EU lifts mask requirement for air travel

BRUSSELS: The European Union will no longer require masks to be worn at airports and on planes starting next week amid the easing of coronavirus restrictions across the bloc, authorities said Wednesday. The European Union Aviation Safety Agency said it hoped the joint decision, made with the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control, would mark "a big step forward in the normalization of air travel" for passengers and crews. The new guideline "takes account of the latest developments in the pandemic, in particular the levels of vaccination and naturally acquired immunity, and the accompanying lifting of restrictions in a growing number of European countries," the two agencies said in a joint statement. "Passengers should however behave responsibly and respect the choices of others around them," EASA Executive Director Patrick Ky said. "And a passenger who is coughing and sneezing should strongly consider wearing a face mask, for the reassurance of those seated nearby." While the new recommendations take effect on May 16, rules for masks may still vary by airline beyond that date if they fly to or from destinations where the rules are different. The Associated Press reported. European Center for Disease Prevention and Control director Andrea Ammon said washing hands and social distancing should still be practiced, but airport operators are advised not to impose distancing requirements if these are likely to lead to a bottleneck. — APP

PU, Canadian varsity to join hands in social work

LAHORE: Punjab University and University of Calgary, Canada will work jointly in the field of social work under Transforming the Field Education Landscape: Intersections of Research and Practice in the Canadian Social Work Field Education Project. The international collaboration has been made possible due to the special efforts of PU Department of Social Work's Chairperson Prof Dr Syeda Mehnaz Hassan and Prof Dr Julie Drolet, Professor and TFEL Project Director, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary. Giving details of the project, Prof Dr Syeda Mehnaz Hassan told media here Wednesday that TFEL is a partnership project that aims at better preparing the next generation of social workers in Canada by creating training and mentoring opportunities for students; developing and mobilizing innovative and promising field education practices; and improving the integration of research and practice in the field education. — APP



KUALA LUMPUR: Pakistan High Commissioner to Malaysia Amna Baloch paid a courtesy call on Tan Sri Acryl Sani, IG Police at Bukit Aman HQs. Issues related to enhancing Pakistan-Malaysia security cooperation came under discussion. — DNA

Baku rejects Russia's unfounded bio-lab accusations

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Recently, Azerbaijan's State Security Service rejected accusations by Russian representatives at the United Nations, blaming Azerbaijan for maintaining biological research centers with alleged financial support from third countries. The claim, repeated by the Russian Defense Ministry for several years, this time was made by Moscow at the UN, and targeted not only Azerbaijan but also Ukraine, Georgia, and Armenia. In response, Azerbaijan's State Security Service (SSS) has unequivocally denied the presence of foreign biological laboratories in Azerbaijan. "Recently, representatives of the Russian Federation have repeatedly expressed opinions, among others at international events, about

the activities in Azerbaijan of centers allegedly conducting scientific research on biological weapons with the financial support of third countries," the service said. The SSS added that such unsubstantiated statements are causing some concern among the Azerbaijani public. "In this regard, we note that such scientific centers have never functioned in Azerbaijan and there have been no studies that could harm the health of the population of the country or citizens of neighboring states. It is regrettable that such information, not confirmed by Azerbaijan, is voiced at international events, including the United Nations. Also, based on partnerships, we express our readiness to investigate specific cases, if they are provided by the opposite side," the service added. Moscow has created

its propaganda on US biological facilities in Ukraine after the commencement of the Russian-Ukrainian war. According to Russia's Defense Ministry, there are some 30 US-owned biomedical labs in Ukraine. Igor Kirillov, chief of the



radiation, chemical, and biological defense forces of the Russian military, made a statement on the US military biological program in Ukraine, claiming that the US Department of Defense is carrying out military bio-

logical projects throughout the former Soviet Union. According to unofficial sources, the US-owned laboratories have been active in Ukraine since 2010, in Georgia since 2011, and in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Armenia since 2016.

Moscow has long been worried about the activities of Armenia-based bio-laboratories as well. Surprisingly, when Russian media outlets discuss the issue, they claim that one of these laboratories is located in Azerbaijan.

A few years ago, Igor Kirillov claimed that there were allegedly Pentagon-controlled laboratories in Azerbaijan and that they were even "being rebuilt." "There are no laboratories in Azerbaijan under the control of another state. Therefore, there is no question of their reconstruction," the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry denied the allegations immediately. On January 22, the Rossiya-24 TV channel aired a program about microbiological laboratories created by the US Defense Department (the Pentagon) in a number of ex-Soviet nations. The documentary "Andromeda strain" by investigative journalist Arkady Mamontov talks about US biological facilities in former Soviet states. Unfortunately, Mamontov, a well-known Russian investigative journalist, who has produced a number of com-

pelting films, stated that similar laboratories existed in Azerbaijan but failed to offer any evidence. The film also discusses Armenian laboratories. According to the journalist, Armenia, which has a population of 3 million people, owns 12 such laboratories. Mamontov clearly expresses dissatisfaction with it in his film and does not even hesitate to use expressions insulting Armenians. Azerbaijani experts consider these claims as unfounded, saying that Russia's statements may in reality be to legitimize the war in Ukraine. They describe the allegations against Azerbaijan as not convincing since the country always pursued a balanced foreign policy in the region. Ruslan Imamgulyev, a military analyst, sees certain dangers in Russia's accusations against Azerbaijan.

Briefs

US Dollar hits
all time high
at Rs190

DNA

KARACHI: Amid ongoing uncertainty in the country, Pakistani Rupee continued to slump against US Dollar in the inter-bank market. The local currency depreciated Rs1.36 on the back of weak macros including higher import bill along with delay in the IMF tranche. The dollar closed at 190.02 when compared to the previous day's close of 188.66.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) also witnessed a bearish trend as KSE-100 index fell by over 600 points in intraday trade and fell below 43,000 mark.

Rasheed to
move SC
for overseas
Pakistanis vote

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Former interior minister and Awami Muslim League chief Sheikh Rasheed has announced to move SC for the provision of the rights to vote to overseas Pakistanis.

"Country is running with the foreign remittances sent by 10 million overseas Pakistanis, will move to court if they are deprived of voting right," Sheikh Rasheed said in his statement. Rasheed said he will ensure the provision of voting rights to overseas Pakistanis. The Pakistani diaspora will protest if they are not allowed to exercise their right to vote. Criticising the decision of doing trade with India, Sheikh Rasheed said the move is like accepting the Modi's steps of August 5 in the occupied Kashmir. Kashmiris will never accept this move of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz-led federal government. Earlier, Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazir Tarar on Wednesday said that present government's top agenda to introduce electoral reforms in the country would ensure transparency in the democratic process and level playing field for all political parties. He said the government was ready to hear opposition regarding the issue of reforms as it is a matter of the "future of Pakistan's democracy".

UK promises to
defend Sweden
if attacked

STOCKHOLM: Britain has pledged to defend Sweden if the country came under attack, with Prime Ministers Boris Johnson and Magdalena Andersson signing a security assurance deal outside Stockholm. The agreement will "fortify northern Europe's defences, in the face of renewed threats," Johnson said in a statement on Wednesday, adding it "is a symbol of the everlasting assurance between our nations." "These are not a short-term stop-gap, but a long-term commitment to bolster military ties and global stability, and fortify Europe's defences for generations to come," Johnson said in the statement. Sweden and Finland are pondering whether to join NATO following Russia's incursion into Ukraine on February 24. Johnson is later expected to make a similar defence commitment to Finland, where he will meet with President Sauli Niinisto. Finland shares a 1,340-kilometre land border with Russia. - APP

German govt
agrees to boost
its Mali UN
contingent

BERLIN: Germany on Wednesday said it had agreed to raise its contingent in the UN's MINUSMA peacekeeping mission in Mali to a maximum of 1,400 troops from 1,100 previously to help plug gaps left by a French pullout. "The upper limit was increased by 300. This is intended to compensate for capacities previously undertaken by French forces," said government spokeswoman Christiane Hoffmann, who added that the Mali mandate had been extended to May 31, 2023. The announcement comes as France is pulling its forces out of Mali, which are separate from MINUSMA, after relations with the country's ruling junta broke down.

These forces - part of France's Barkhane anti-jihadist mission in the Sahel - have also played an important part supporting UN troops in the country, especially with air power. - APP

Palestinian journalist
killed by Israeli gunfire

Israeli forces shot Abu Akleh in the head while she was on assignment in Jenin in the occupied West Bank

MONITORING DESK

RAMALLAH: Israeli forces have shot dead Al Jazeera's journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in the occupied West Bank, according to the Palestinian health ministry. Abu Akleh, a longtime TV correspondent for Al Jazeera Arabic, was killed on Wednesday while covering Israeli army raids in the city of Jenin in the northern occupied West Bank. She was rushed to a hospital in Jenin in critical condition, where she was declared dead shortly after, at 7:15am (4:15 GMT), according to the ministry and Al Jazeera journalists. Abu Akleh was wearing a press vest and was standing with other journalists when she was killed. Another Al Jazeera journalist, Ali al-Samoudi, was also wounded by a bullet in the back at the scene. He is now in stable condition. The head of the medicine department at al-Najah University in Nablus confirmed that Abu Akleh was shot in the head. He said that her body was transferred for an autopsy based on an order from the public prosecution. Abu Akleh's body was carried out of the university coated in a Palestinian flag, after which she will be taken to the Istishari Hospital in Ramallah. An official funeral will be held for her tomorrow morning at the Palestinian presidency headquarters in Ramallah. Al-Samoudi and other journalists at the scene said there were no Palestinian fighters present when the



journalists were shot, directly disputing an Israeli statement referencing the possibility that it was Palestinian fire. "We were going to film the Israeli army operation and suddenly they shot us without asking us to leave or stop filming," said al-Samoudi. "The first bullet hit me and the second bullet hit Shireen ... there was no Palestinian military resistance at all at the scene." Shatha Hanaysha, a local journalist who was standing next to Abu Akleh when she was shot, also told Al Jazeera that there had been no confrontations between Palestinian fighters and the Israeli army. She said the group of journalists had been directly targeted. "We were four journalists, we were all wearing vests, all wearing helmets," Hanaysha said. "The [Israeli] occupation army did not stop firing even after she collapsed."

PM Shehbaz, Info
Ministry condemn
the killing

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said it was the deliberate strategy of Israel and India to silence the voices of those who narrated the stories of oppression faced by the people of Palestine and the Occupied Kashmir. The prime minister expressed these views in reaction to the killing of Al Jazeera journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot dead during a raid of Israeli forces in the West Bank. "Strongly condemn the assassination of respected Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh at the hands of Israeli forces," he wrote in a tweet. PM Sharif said, "Silencing the voices of those who tell stories of oppressed people is part of a deliberate strategy employed by Israel and India in Palestine and the Occupied Kashmir". Meanwhile, the Ministry of Information is deeply shocked over the killing of the Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and the injury of other journalists,

including Ali Smodi, at dawn today in Jenin refugee camp. The Israeli occupation forces killed Abu Akleh, who was wearing her clearly visible and marked journalist gear, when covering the Israeli military storming of the refugee camp. In several previous occasions, the Israeli occupation has repeatedly targeted, injured and assaulted Palestinian journalists, including the renowned journalist Abu Akleh. Today, Shireen joins other journalists that Israel killed as they worked on revealing the crimes of the Israeli occupation. The killing of Shireen Abu Akleh can never deter our people from continuing struggle for freedom and will only shorten the life of this occupation and bring us closer to freedom and ending Israeli impunity. The killing of Abu Akleh requires consolidating and joining Palestinian, Arab and international efforts to achieve justice for the souls of Shireen and all journalists, victims of the Israeli criminal occupation, ensuring Israeli accountability and ending its impunity.

Pakistan strongly condemns
killing of Palestinian journalist
Government of Pakistan stands in solidarity with
the people and Government of the State of Palestine

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the killing of a Palestinian journalist, Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot dead while covering an Israeli raid in the Jenin refugee camp of occupied West Bank. The Government and people of Pakistan extend deepest condolences to the family of Shireen Abu Akleh.

A statement from foreign office said that the Israeli attempts to silence the voices of those who continue to expose the Israeli vi-

olations would not succeed, rather reveal the continued brutality of occupation forces.

Pakistan calls upon the international community to take urgent action to put an end to the Israeli occupation, which continues to fuel conflict, tension and instability in the region, and remains a matter of grave concern for the entire Muslim world.

The Government of Pakistan stands in solidarity with the people and Government of the State of Palestine in their just demand for basic rights and dignity.

We reaffirm our consistent and

unstinted support for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian cause, which has always been a defining principle of Pakistan's foreign policy.

On Wednesday, Israeli forces shot dead Al Jazeera's journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in the occupied West Bank, according to the Palestinian health ministry. Abu Akleh, a longtime TV correspondent for Al Jazeera Arabic, was killed on Wednesday while covering Israeli army raids in the city of Jenin in the northern occupied West Bank. She was rushed to a hospital in Jenin in

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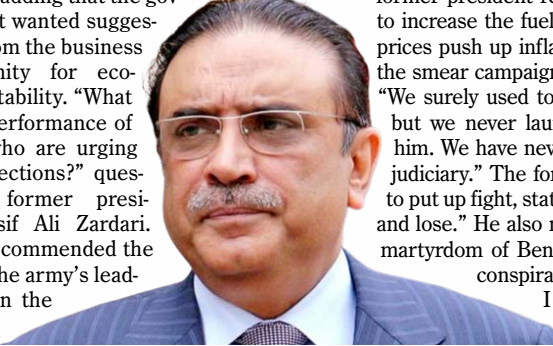
Another Al Jazeera journalist, Ali al-Samoudi, was also wounded by a bullet in the back at the scene. He is now in stable condition. The head of the medicine department at al-Najah University in Nablus confirmed that Abu Akleh was shot in the head.

PPP will contest elections
after electoral reforms: Zardari

DNA

KARACHI: Former president and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari said Wednesday during a press conference, "We never said we are afraid of elections. We will contest elections after electoral reforms." Addressing a press conference in Karachi today, the former president said that they removed the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government by democratic means only. He claimed that they do not fear new elections but have to address the issue of NAB and electoral reforms beforehand. Ali Zardari added that he spoke to Shehbaz Shareef before he left for London and they have a good understanding as of now. The person who could not perform in four years is demanding new elections, we will see what he achieves in the next elections, he added. "The electoral and NAB reforms are part of our game plan. We will conduct elections as soon as electoral reforms are introduced," he declared. "What can he [Imran Khan] do

if elections are conducted early? I have to burn the stoves in the house of the people," he said, adding that the government wanted suggestions from the business community for economic stability. "What is the performance of those who are urging early elections?" questioned former president Asif Ali Zardari. He also commended the role of the army's leadership in the current



political environment in the country and said: "Should I salute General Bajwa for being apolitical or should I fight him? We know they can be apolitical, and we want them to be so."

He also said that the Overseas Pakistanis knew very little about the domestic politics of Pakistan, and therefore, they were being

misled. "We want reserved seats in the Parliament for the Overseas Pakistanis." former president remarked, "We do not want to increase the fuel prices, for rise in the fuel prices push up inflation." He also condemned the smear campaign against the army, stating: "We surely used to call Musharraf a dictator, but we never launched a campaign against him. We have never campaigned against the judiciary." The former president also vowed to put up fight, stating: "In democracy, we win and lose." He also maintained that behind the martyrdom of Benazir Shaheed, there was a conspiracy to break Pakistan. Had

I not raised 'Pakistan Khapay' slogan after the martyrdom of Bibi Shaheed, the circumstances would

have been different." "Who is he [Imran Khan] to give the titles of Mir Jaffer and Mir Sadiq to other people," he deplored. PPP co-chairman pointed out that it would take some time for the new government to rectify the circumstances, adding: "The ex-cricketer does not want anyone in the government beside him."

Bilawal writes
to UN on
India's illegal
delimitation in
IIOJK

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has asked the United Nations Security Council to take immediate cognizance of the grave implications of the illegal 'delimitation' of IIOJK by India, calling it India's sinister ploy to reducing the representation of Muslims.

As part of Pakistan's ongoing efforts to internationally highlight the alarming situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) in the wake of India's illegal and unilateral actions of August 5, 2019, the foreign minister addressed a letter to the UN Security Council president and the UN secretary general on illegal "delimitation" exercise in the IIOJK.

Bilawal, in the letter, apprised them, in particular, of India's sinister ploy of reducing the representation of Muslims through the unlawful 'delimitation' exercise in the IIOJK. The foreign minister urged the UN Security Council to remind India that Jammu and Kashmir remained an internationally recognized dispute pending resolution, and that India should refrain from bringing about any illegal demographic changes in the occupied territory in contravention to international law, the Geneva conventions, and India's own obligations under the relevant UNSC resolutions.

He asked the UNSC to compel and counsel India to halt its human rights abuses against the people of IIOJK and cease forthwith the endemic political persecution and economic exploitation of the Kashmiris. The foreign minister also asked the UNSC to prevail upon India to let the people of IIOJK determine their own future through a free and fair plebiscite under the United Nations auspices as enshrined in the Council's relevant resolutions.

Kh Asif hints
at early election

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Wednesday that the prospects of general elections in the country before the appointment of new army chief this year could not be ruled out. In an interview media, the Defence Minister went one step ahead and said there was also a chance of a new government taking office prior to the appointment which was due in November. "The current Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa has already made it clear that he is not interested in the extension of his tenure," Asif said, and added, "I welcome this statement because it has laid to rest all speculations being made in this regard. Before that, General Raheel Sharif, too, had not sought extension in his tenure, either directly or indirectly."

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader was of the view that just like was the case with the country's judiciary, it was now time for institutionalizing the appointment of new army chief as well.

"If this arrangement is made, there will be no room for rumours as it will be known beforehand as to who is going to become the next chief. I know who will take oath as the chief justice of Pakistan in 2028," he added. Asif went on to add that it was his personal opinion that instead of speculating as to who would be the next chief, it should be ensured that only deserving generals ascend to the post.

Govt orders vip
security cover
for Maryam

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday ordered interior ministry to provide VIP security to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-President Maryam Nawaz. The Ministry of Interior approved VIP security cover for PML-N leader Maryam Nawaz on the recommendation of the threat assessment committee. The PML-N vice president will be provided police and rangers security cover during her stay and movement in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

Furthermore, the interior ministry has asked respective provinces to provide the same security cover to Maryam during her movement in other districts. In addition, the ministry also ordered the deployment of house guards at her Lahore residence. As per summary, the ministry also directed concerned department to deploy proper security during Maryam Nawaz's public events.

Young Pakistani elites vow to promote CPEC

The reporter learnt that he always showed up early at work, and worked continuously under extreme heat

BEIJING: Young Pakistani elites with higher education reiterated their commitment to promote CPEC with their hard work, according to a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Wednesday. As a young lad growing up in Punjab, Mohsin Uddin remembered tracking news of the establishment of CPEC with friends throughout their college years. He vividly recalled that "the final establishment of CPEC was such an encouraging news" since China is in a leading position in his research field.

"I always knew that contributing my knowledge to Pakistan's development was my destiny. The establishment of CPEC made me believe that more learning opportunities were ahead of me, and my chance of finding a desired job after graduation increased." Uddin told Gwadar Pro. Now a 26-year-old chemical

engineer, Mohsin Uddin, has realized his dream. He is now devoting himself to the country's energy security and became a chemical engineer at Thar Coal Block I Coal-Electricity Integration Project. In the process, he has become one of the outstanding staff of CPEC projects in 2021. Several hundred miles away, Sindh, another driven, hardworking young gentleman, Syed Abdul Samad Shah, shared a similar, yet different process of deciding his career. "I had never thought that one day I would be a part of CPEC," Samad said. Graduated with a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering and Automation from China's Changsha University of Science & Technology in 2016, Samad has his career path clearly planned: to find a job that matches his major and continue an in-depth study. "I have been ea-

ger to learn since I was young. I think one of the key reasons for me landing as an engineer at Three Gorges Second Phase Wind Power Projects was my desire to learn." Samad said, "Moreover, I am passionate about participating in Pakistan's development. I'm glad to say that working at Three Gorges Second Phase Wind Power Projects turns out to be my way of contributing to the prosperity of Pakistan." Syed Abdul Samad Shah told Gwadar Pro that his job "extends his wings widely". The job opportunity has brought him the utmost positive impact in terms of knowledge, learning and self-actualization. In 2021, he was also rewarded as the outstanding staff of CPEC projects. The latest data suggested that CPEC has generated around 75,000 jobs for locals in Pakistan. Chinese labor makes up

only 17.5% of the total number of laborers currently working on CPEC while 82.5% labor includes Pakistani citizens. More and more youngsters in Pakistan with higher education are contributing to the socioeconomic uplift of Pakistan through CPEC. Pakistani youth never shy away from the burden of improving Pakistan's wellbeing. Time and again, more and more youngsters were encouraged to step out of their comfortable zone and do something extraordinary for the country. Samad and Mohsin are definitely celebrated examples. Samad was involved in multiple tasks related to Three Gorges Second Phase Wind Power farm till its commercial operation. As a rising star of the company, he joined the early negotiation of EPA with Government authorities, participated in the bidding for engineers, took part in supervising the project's

civil, mechanical & electrical works at site. Through joint efforts, the project was successfully put into operation in June 2018. "I believe in hard work," Samad said. The reporter learnt that he always showed up early at work, and worked continuously under extreme heat. "No pain no gain. I guess, I felt that my knowledge and experience have skyrocketed. Mohsin's duty is to test the quality of lubricating oil and fuel which enables the successful operation of equipment at Thar Coal Block I Coal-Electricity Integration Project. "Good operation of equipment will increase the country's coal production and power generation. Serving the country through my knowledge of chemical engineering is my proudest experience." After years of practice, Mohsin can tell whether the lubricating oil and fuel was at its top quality through a glimpse.