



Islamabad POST

Monday, May 16, 2022

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Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed elected as new UAE president

Detailed News On Page-01

Lavrov: Russia forges new partnerships

Detailed News On Page-08



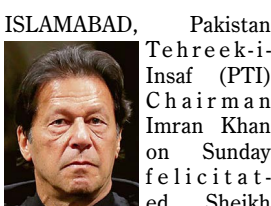
Andrew Symonds dies in car accident

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Briefs

Imran Khan felicitates UAE President



ISLAMABAD, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan on Sunday felicitated Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan for being elected President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), following the sad demise of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Taking to Twitter, the former prime minister said that he extends his warm felicitations to Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan upon being elected President of UAE. "It is his vision that is already transforming UAE into a leading economic [and] political player on the global stage," he said and added that as the prime minister, he saw firsthand his brotherly affection for Pakistan. - APP

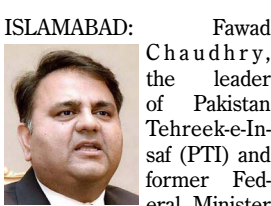
China's handling of Covid laudable



BEIJING: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that China's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic by adopting a dynamic zero-COVID approach has set high standards for the world. "The way the leadership of China relies on science and facts, and is still doing everything possible to ensure the safety and health of every single citizen has set excellent standards internationally," the foreign minister told Xinhua. - APP

Crime minister on fourth trip

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Fawad Chaudhry, the leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and former Federal Minister for Information, chastised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for undertaking his fourth foreign trip in a month. In a tweet, Chaudhry wrote that the courts are so helpless that one can gauge the extent to which no action has been taken on the bail of Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shehbaz and they were unable to appear before the court owing to their busy schedule.

Miranshah blast 3 soldiers, children martyred

ISPR says that intelligence agencies are conducting an investigation into the suicide bomber, his handlers and facilitators



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: At least six people were martyred, including three Pakistani Army soldiers and as many children, in a suicide blast in the vicinity of Miranshah, North Waziristan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Sunday. "Lance Havaldar Zubair Qadir (resident of Pakpattan, age 33 years) Sepoy Uzair Asfar (resident of Haripur, age 21 years) Sepoy Qasim Maqsood (resident of Multan, age 22 years) and 3 innocent children Ahmed Hassan (age 11 years), Ahsan (age 8 years), and Anum (age 4 years) embraced shahadat [martyrdom]," read the statement. ISPR added that intelligence agencies are conducting an investigation into the suicide bomber, his handlers and facilitators. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif took to his official Twitter account to express his "heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families". On April 23, at least three Pakistan Army soldiers were martyred when terrorists opened fire on the troops from across the

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PM, Info Minister condemn suicide blast

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Sunday strongly condemned the suicide blast in Miranshah, North Waziristan in which reportedly six persons including three security personnel embraced martyrdom. The Prime Minister expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives and conveyed his sympathies to the bereaved families. He also prayed for the high ranks of the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with equanimity, the Media Wing of PM Office said in a press release. The Prime Minister paid tributes to the sacrifices of Lance Havaldar Zubair Qadir, Sepoy Aziz Asghar and Sepoy Qasim Maqsood. He said that the entire nation felt pride over the supreme sacrifices of the armed forces of Pakistan which had always been a golden chapter in national history. Such a display of valor and sacrifice had always remained a glowing principle of the armed forces of Pakistan which were

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Sheikh Mohamed elected as UAE president

Sheikh Mohamed served as Abu Dhabi Crown Prince since November 2004

DNA

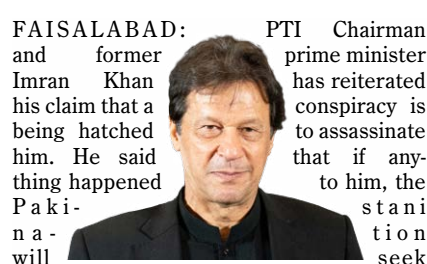
ABU DHABI: The UAE's long-time de facto ruler Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was elected as president on Saturday, official media said, a day after the death of former leader Sheikh Khalifa. Sheikh Mohamed was elected by the Federal Supreme Council, WAM news agency said, after years of calling the shots from behind the scenes while his half-brother Sheikh Khalifa was sidelined by poor health. The Supreme Council of the UAE elected His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, as the President of the UAE. Following the announcement, His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Dubai Executive Council, congratulated Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed. The 61-year-old leader will be the country's third president, after succeeding Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who passed away on May 13, at the age of 73. Sheikh Mohamed, who served as Abu Dhabi Crown Prince since November 2004, will also be the 17th Ruler of Abu Dhabi.



ISLAMABAD: UAE flag flying at half mast due to death of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. - Photo Shahid Raju

Khan asks people to get justice for him if killed

ISHFAQ MUGHAL



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Sheikh warns against arresting Khan

FAISALABAD: Former interior minister and Awami Muslim League President Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Sunday warned that if PTI Chairman Imran Khan is arrested, Pakistan will turn into Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka, a country of 22 million people, is currently

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'Your game is over', Maryam tells Imran

The PML-N leader accused the former premier of avoiding to tell people his performance

GUJRAT: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-President Maryam Nawaz mocked former prime minister Imran Khan, comparing him to a "spoiled child". "He [Imran] has been raising a hue and cry now a - days for being ousted from power," she said while addressing party supporters gathered in Gujrat's Kotla area. The PML-N leader told the deposed premier that his now "game is over" and the PML-N is now in-charge of the affairs. "As his Letergate theory failed, he resorted to a new narrative, saying his life is in danger," she added. The PML-N leader accused the former premier of resorting to such

Continued on Page 06

Bilawal slams Imran's claims

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: PPP Chairman and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said on Sunday that the conspiracy to oust the PTI government was not hatched inside the White House, as claimed by PTI chairman and former premier Imran Khan, but was prepared inside Bilawal House. Addressing a rally in Karachi, the foreign minister lashed out at Imran, rubbishing the PTI chief's claim that his government was ousted through a foreign conspiracy at the behest of the United States. "Now this selected says it was a foreign conspiracy.

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Prices of petrol to remain unchanged

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD, May 15 (APP): Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Miftah Ismail on Sunday said the government was not raising petrol prices and a summary for that matter has been sent to the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for a swift decision. "Rising petrol prices causes surge in food prices, which is the core of inflation and affects a common man directly," he said this while addressing to the media in Press Information Department (PID). He further said that prime minister wanted to provide relief to already

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Australia's Andrew Symonds dies in car crash - Page 06

Shahbaz lauds Canada's 'invaluable support' to Pak - Page 07

Palestinians fear another 'Nakba' amid Israel's policies - Page 08

Finnish president confirms NATO membership bid

NEWS DESK

HELSINKI: Finland's President Sauli Niinisto confirmed on Sunday that his country would apply for membership of the NATO military alliance, in a historic policy shift prompted by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moscow, which shares a 1,300 km (800 mile) border with Finland, has said it would be a mistake for Helsinki to join the 30-strong transatlantic alliance and that it would harm bilateral ties. Sweden is also expected to follow suit as public support for membership has grown amid security concerns. Sunday's announcement comes after Niinisto and Prime Minister Sanna Marin said on Thursday they both favoured NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) membership, giving a green light for the country to apply.

Turkey lays out demands

AGENCIES

BERLIN: Turkey's foreign minister said on Sunday that Sweden and Finland must stop supporting terrorist groups in their countries, provide clear security guarantees and lift export bans on Turkey as they seek membership in NATO. Speaking after a NATO foreign ministers meeting in Berlin, Mevlut Cavusoglu said he met his Swedish and Finnish counterparts and all were seeking to address Turkey's concerns. He added that Turkey was not threatening anybody or

Continued on Page 06

"Today, we, the president and the government's foreign policy committee, have together decided that Finland ... will apply for NATO membership," Niinisto told reporters in the presidential palace in Helsinki. Niinisto called Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday to tell him of Finland's plans to join the alliance. Putin said such a move would hurt Russian-Finnish relations. "I, or Finland, are not known to sneak around and quietly disappear behind a corner. It is better to say it straight what already has been said, also to the concerned party and that is what I wanted to do," he said about his call on Sunday. The Finnish president expressed readiness to hold talks with his Turkish counterpart Tayyip Erdogan after Ankara raised objections to the Nordic countries joining NATO.

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Pakistan begins testing travelers from Gulf countries

DNA

KARACHI: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has restarted Covid-19 tests at the airports for people arriving from the Gulf countries. The testing was resumed after Pakistan recorded its first case of a new sub-variant of the Omicron coronavirus variant. The new variant is named "Omicron sub-variant BA.2.12.1". According to the notification issued by the CAA, the testing was being done on the directives of the health minister. Teams have been deployed at the Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi airports to conduct rapid antigen tests. The passengers would obtain the re-

sults of these tests within 20 minutes. Passengers with a positive test result will have to quarantine at their own expense. Meanwhile, those who test negative will be allowed to go home. They will have to stay indoors for a week. Pakistan reported its first case of a new sub-variant May 9. According to the ministry of health, the variant entered Pakistan through a person traveling from Qatar. The person had mild Covid-19 symptoms and has since fully recovered. All the members of the patient's family tested negative. "The situation is under control right now but we must stay vigilant," said the minister according to a government release. The federal health minister said that

the government was monitoring the situation and there was no cause for alarm. After the sub-variant was detected Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif ordered to immediately restore the National Command and Operation Centre. The National Command and Operations Centre (NCO) which was established in 2020 as the nerve centre for Pakistan's unified response against the coronavirus ceased operations on March 31, 2020. The then former NCO Chief Asad Umer said the decline in the spread of the virus and the vaccination rates indicate people should return to normal lives. "This institute which was established in an emergency situation [now] needs to be phased out," said Umar.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Shazia Marri visited the UAE consulate and signed the condolence book. She also condoled the death of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan with the embassy officials. – DNA

CM orders special relief package for masses

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz has ordered to provide genuine relief to the common man by subsidising the prices of flour, ghee and sugar through the Chief Minister's relief package. He was chairing a meeting at his office in which the broad contours of the special package came under review. The proposal to set up more than 1,000 fair price shops across Punjab was also discussed. The chief minister ordered for giving the package a final shape at the earliest. Hemza Shahbaz said that price-hike had made the life of common people miserable and regretted



that the previous government only made false promises with masses.

The chief minister remarked that he was endeavouring to solve problems of price-hike and urged the officers to take practical steps for controlling it. He exhorted the officers to help reduce prices to win blessings of Allah Almighty. Members of Punjab Assembly Abdul Aleem Khan, Sardar Awais Leghari, Nadeem Kamran, Chaudhry Muhammad Iqbal, Bilal Yasin, Ramzan Siddique Bhatti, Zeeshan Rafique, ticket holder Hafiz Muhammad Nauman, PML-N leader Atta Tarar, Chief Secretary, Inspector General Police and officials concerned attended the meeting. – APP

PM directs CM KP to arrest Sikhs' killers

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday while strongly condemning the killing of two members of the Sikh community in Peshawar, directed the chief minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ensure immediate arrest and punishment of the culprits. He also asked the chief minister to ensure steps for the protection of the lives and properties of the citizens particularly of the non-Muslims, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Moreover, prime minister expressed sympathies with the bereaved families of the deceased Ranjeet Singh and Kanwal Singh. The prime minister observed that enmity with Pakistan was the reason behind this act of terrorism and expressed resolve to eliminate enemies of the country. He also assured the bereaved families of the complete support of the federal government. – APP

Shazia visits UAE consulate, offers condolences

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Shazia Marri visited United Arab Emirates (UAE) Consulate in Karachi to offer condolences to the Counsel General of UAE and the government of UAE on the sad demise of the Presi-

dent of UAE, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

The Federal Minister Shazia Marri did Fatiha with Consul General of UAE in Karachi, Mr. Mr. Bakheet Al Remeithi, and wrote her views on the condolence book. Federal Minister further stated that it was a sad moment for both the

countries i.e. Pakistan and the UAE as Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan had a very close relationship with the government and the people of Pakistan. He and his Khalifa Foundation was involved in a number of welfare activities in Pakistan and always played a vital role during emergency situations in Pakistan.

Mills refuse to sell sugar at Rs70 per kg

LAHORE: Sugar Mills Association has refused to sell sugar at Rs70 per kilogram. According to details, mills and Punjab government failed to reach an agreement over price of the commodity and the association has presented a counter proposal to the authorities.

The mills have said that country has two million tons of sugar in surplus and asked government to allow them to export 1.5 million tons of the commodity which can earn country about one billion rupees in foreign exchange. Earlier, Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz on Saturday directed all sugar mills to sell sugar at Rs70 per kg. The Punjab CM's team held talks with the Sugar Mills Association in which reduction of prices was discussed to provide relief to the people. – DNA

SSC annual exams 2022 being held under foolproof arrangements

DC Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq here the other day visited Govt Islamia High School No. 4 Liat Road and reviewed the arrangements for ongoing SSC annual examinations

RAWALPINDI: Secondary School Certificate (SSC) annual examinations 2022 were being held under foolproof arrangements. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rawalpindi Tahir Farooq here the other day visited Government Islamia High School No. 4 Liat Road and reviewed the arrangements for ongoing SSC annual examinations. Meanwhile, Rawalpindi Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (RBISE) spokesman informed that as many as 117,796 students were ap-

pearing in the exams which had started in four districts of the division in accordance with the schedule announced earlier. 388 exam centers including 142 for boys and 139 for girls had also been set up besides 107 combined centers, he added. The board had made foolproof arrangements for transparent and smooth holding of SSC exams which started on May 10, he said. He informed that 60,868 male and 56,928 female students had been issued roll number slips to ap-

pear in the exams. The spokesperson said that special monitoring teams had been formed by the board chairman Dr. Khalid Mehmood that would conduct surprise visits to the examination centres. The reports were being presented to the chairman on daily basis and action was directly being taken by the chairman, he said. The central control room was set up in Rawalpindi Board's office besides district level control rooms were also set up in Attock, Jhelum and Chakwal. – APP

Two persons of Sikh community killed

PESHAWAR: Unknown assailants killed two persons of Sikh community at Sarband area, said police on Sunday. The police informed that two persons riding on motorbike opened fire on two shopkeepers of Sikh community selling spices in Bata Tal bazaar of Sarband and killed them on the spot. – APP

AJK PM hints to initiate accountability

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan has said that providing relief to common people and preventing misuse of taxpayers' money was his government's top priority. "How to start and from where to begin the process of accountability would be decided in the next few weeks", the PM said during an interview to a private TV channel a day before yesterday. "The law will take its own course and the government will not go after political opponents", he said adding no one will be victimized under the guise of accountability. Referring to opposition's role in democracy, he said, "Opposition is an essential part in parliamentary democracy, the government cannot function without opposition but for larger



interests of the people the opposition's constructive role is imperative". He said that when the PML-N government was formed in AJK, there was a PTI government in the center. The federal government, he said, extended its all-out support and cooperation to the PML-N government. About the 13th amendment in the constitution of Azad Kashmir, the PM said, "The generous support extended to PML-N

government led by Raja Farooq Haider Khan has made constitutional amendments possible in the state". He said that the PTI government at the center had demonstrated magnanimity by providing funds due to which the system of government in Azad Kashmir was running smoothly. The AJK PM expressed the optimism that the incumbent federal government would demonstrate the same spirit and cooperate fully with our gov-

CM KP condemns suicide attack in N.Waziristan

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan Sunday condemned suicide bombing in North Waziristan in which three Pakistan Army soldiers and three children were martyred. Chief Minister expresses condolences over the martyrdom of six persons including three security personnel in the blast. In a statement issued here, the CM expressed heartfelt sympathy to the families of the martyrs. He said that security forces have made everlasting sacrifices in the war on terror for the sake of nation and country. He said that such cowardly incidents will not dampen the spirits of

the security forces. The CM said that the whole nation stands by the security forces to eradicate terrorism, adding the nation salutes the sacrifices of the Pakistan Army and other security forces. The people of the tribal districts have also made unprecedented sacrifices in the war on terror, adding these sacrifices of the security forces and people of the tribal districts will not go in vain. It is worth mentioning here that three Pakistan Army soldiers and three children were martyred in a suicide attack in Miran Shah area of North Waziristan, Pakistan Army's media wing, ISPR said Sunday. – APP

Govt Hajj Scheme: Balloting held for 31,253 successful pilgrims

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services, Mufti Asad Mahmood on Sunday held balloting for 31,253 successful pilgrims out of total 63, 604 applicants who wanted to perform the religious obligation through the Government Hajj Scheme. Addressing the press conference along with Minister for Housing Maulana Abdul Wasay, Religious Affairs Ministry Secretary Sardar Ajaz Ahmad Khan Jaffar and Joint Secretary Usman Sarosh Alvi here at the Press Information Department, he said due to COVID-19 and other domestic issues the Hajj process had been delayed. In addition, the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah had not provided the details of mandatory Hajj expenses yet, he said adding as soon as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony received the details, it would

publicize the total cost of Hajj. He said the Saudi government had given the deadline of May 16, to complete all the codal formalities related to Hajj. Religious Affairs Minister Mufti Abdul Shaqoor and Additional Secretary Aftab Akbar Durrani were already on Saudi Arabia's visit in a bid to settle down all the issues on a war footing, he added. He said due to time constraints and lack of mandatory Hajj expenses, the religious ministry could not seek the federal cabinet's seal of approval on the total cost of Hajj and designated quotas to the government and private Hajj schemes. Asad said after the announcement of mandatory Hajj expenses by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah and approval of Hajj Policy by the government, the total numbers of Government Hajj Scheme and Hajj cost would be announced. He said those who could

not be proceeded for Hajj due to certain reasons, the people in waiting queue would be provided chance as per seniority list. All the aspirant pilgrims would be provided seniority numbers through short message service on their contact numbers provided in the Hajj applications, he added. He said finally, the successful pilgrims would be asked to submit remaining dues in their designated branches of banks while the unsuccessful applicants could obtain their token money Rs 50,000 without seeking permission from the religious affairs ministry. He said despite COVID-19 vaccination and 65 years age restrictions and huge Hajj expenses, a large number of people chose Government Hajj Scheme to perform the religious obligation expressing their confidence in the incumbent government. – APP

Badar Shahbaz appointed as Focal Person to CM Punjab

LAHORE: Badar Shahbaz has been appointed as Social Media Focal Person to Chief Minister of Punjab Hamza Shahbaz Sharif. Badar shall look after social media affairs of the Chief Executive of the most populous province of Pakistan. Taking it to twitter, Badar said, "I'm honored to be named as Chief Minister of Punjab Hamza Shahbaz's Social Media Focal Person. I owe him my gratitude for believing in me and giving me the chance to restructure the social media platform, which had reached new lows under the previous administration." The newly appointed focal persons said, "The operations of social media will be redesigned to be more contemporary and my top aim will be to combat misinformation and ensure freedom of speech on online platforms. He further said that the office will serve as a link between the Chief Minister's office and the general public. – DNA

RDA working to expand rainwater harvesting project

RDA had started this work at Masjid Sarajia with the help of UN Development Programme (UNDP). He said "Water is very much needed in mosques and it is being extended to meet it and it is a big model"

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) was working to expand rainwater harvesting project launched to utilize millions of gallons of rainwater. According to RDA spokesman, RDA had started rainwater harvesting a project with the assistance of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency. He said that rainwater harvesting was new to the Rawalpindi citizens but very useful for providing water for gardening, irrigation, septic tanks, and car wash stations. He said, RDA would not approve new residential or commercial projects without a proper rainwater management plan. The department on the directives of Director General, RDA had complied with the rules for the use of precious rainwater, he added. "Rawalpindi is the second city in Punjab which has launched the project to collect rainwater," he

said adding, following the implementation of the RDA's rainwater harvesting initiative, Rawalpindi would become the second city in Punjab to introduce environmentally friendly measures. He said that with the depletion of freshwater resources, the collection and use of rainwater has become very important. Speaking about mosques, he said "There are more need and consumption for water in mosques, and to fulfill their needs, it can be improved further, and there will be a larger model for rainwater



harvesting." The spokesman said the flowing water from the mosques was ideal of irrigation as it is free of chemicals. The rainwater collected would be used for ablution and used in the washing rooms as well. The remaining ablution water can be collected and used to irrigate plants and herbs in the gardens, he added. "In a nutshell, it can be used for anything other than human consumption, where a filtering process is re-

quired," he added. RDA had launched the project last year and a local mosque acquired the system to save rain water for ablution and then channeling the used water for irrigation in parks. The project helped utilize millions of gallons of rain water instead of letting it drain into Nullah Leh and other drains. He informed the rainwater harvesting system was inaugurated at Masjid Sarajia, Asghar Mall Scheme. RDA had started this work at Masjid Sarajia with the help of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). He said "Water is very much needed in mosques and it is being extended to meet it and it is a big model." Rainwater collected was being used for ablution and washrooms and ablution water was being collected and used for plants and grass in the front park, he added. – APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

APRIL

April 04 / Senegal	National Day
April 07 / W. H. O.	World Health Day
April 12 / Somalia	Armed Forces Day
April 15 / DPR Korea	The Day of the Sun
April 16 / Denmark	National Day
April 17 / Iran	Army Day
April 17 / Syria	Independence Day
April 18 / Zimbabwe	Independence Day
April 24 / Holy See	Anniversary of His Papacy of his Pontificate
April 25 / DPR Korea	Armed Forces Day
April 26 / Tanzania	National Day
April 27 / Sierra Leone	Independence Day
April 27 / South Africa	Freedom Day
April 30 / Sweden	Birthday of His Majesty
April 30 / Netherlands	Birthday of Queen



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ISLAMABAD: Zafar Bakhtawari Former President ICCL, Chaudhry Naeem, CEO Savour Food, Raja Hassan Akhtar President Blue Area, yousaf Rajpoot Former President Blue Area Furqan Murtaza leading a Rally to show solidarity with pakistan Army in Islamabad. – DNA

Business community asked to have close liaison with FTO

ISLAMABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Dr Asif Mahmood Jah Sunday emphasized the urgent need of uninterrupted close liaison of business community and tax payers with FTO offices across the country for immediate redress of their genuine grievances on top priority.

While talking a corporate sector delegation led by Meher Kashif Younis, former Senior Vice President Lahore which called on him on Sunday to abreast him of taxation problems being confronted by business community, the FTO

said no injustice will be tolerated at any cost against tax payer by the tax collectors through out the country. He said that he always attached great importance to business community especially, all tax payers and fully committed by law to address the genuine grievances due to any mal-administration by any functionaries of Federal Board of Revenue or inland revenue services or customs.

He said all Advisors/Consultants of regional offices of FTO all over the country have already been directed to speed the lawful disposal

of pending complaints on top priority and be decided on merit within stipulated time frame of maximum 60 days.

He said that private sector always play significant role in economic development of the country and state is bound to provide business friendly environment by fully ensuring ease of doing business.

Dr Asif Mahmood Jah, the recipient of civil awards of Sitara-I-Imtiaz and Hilal-I-Imtiaz, said tax payers contribute a major role towards national development by paying taxes timely. On the other

hand, he said FBR is apex tax body in Pakistan which collects taxes and revenue from tax payers strictly in accordance with law. He urged the business community to file only lawful genuine complaints supported with documentary evidence for seeking justice or remedy of grievances.

He said special awareness seminars are being organised at all regional offices and big cities to educate the business community about the role and function of FTO while business honorary coordinators have also been appointed at chambers of

Commerce and Industries for effective better coordination with FTO for prompt action.

Meher Kashif Younis invited FTO to address a awareness seminar in city for tax payers especially members of business community and offered to sponsor the event which he accepted to be conveyed in the last week of instant month. FTO Advisors Dr Sarfraz Ahmad Warraich, Tauseef Ahmad Qureshi, Advisor to President SAARC Chamber Dr Waqar Ch, former FTO Advisor Dr Fayyaz Ahmad Ranjha and senior officials were also present. – APP

Four new cities are likely to get hotter than usual

ISLAMABAD: A recent study has revealed four cities which are likely to get hotter than usual by the end of 21st century due to climate change in the region. The country is facing extreme weather changes for the past few decades which have affected certain regions more than others. Experts, academicians, environmentalists and general public are concerned about the future climate of the region. "Hyderabad will likely become the hot-

test city of Pakistan by the end of the century with the highest average temperature reaching 29.9 degree Celsius under RCP4.5 and 32 degree Celsius under RCP8.5 followed by Jacobabad, Bahawalnagar, and Bahawalpur", the report found. The most of the hottest cities were detected in areas on the southern side of Pakistan whereas the wettest cities, Murree, Balakot and Muzaffarabad, are located in the monsoon region. – APP

Int'l Families Day celebrated

International Day of Families promoted the importance of a healthy and well-balanced family.

ISLAMABAD: International Day of Families marked on May 15 (Sunday) across the globe including Pakistan, celebrated the importance of families and the work started during the International Year of Families.

International Day of Families promoted the importance of a healthy and well-balanced family. A wide range of events were organized at local, national and international levels. These include: workshops, seminars and policy meeting for public officials; exhibitions and organized discussions to raise awareness of the annual theme; educational sessions

for children and young people; and the launch of campaigns for public policies to strengthen and support family units. In some countries, tool kits are created to help people organize celebrations aimed at a particular section of the population, such as school children or young adults.

The year 1994 was proclaimed as the International Year of Families by the United Nations. This was a response to changing social and economic structures, which have affected and still affect the structure and stability of family units in many regions of the globe. The

International Day of Families, on May 15, is an occasion to reflect on the work started during 1994 and to celebrate the importance of families, people, societies and cultures around the world. It has been held every year since 1995.

The symbol of the International Day of Families consists of a solid green circle with an image in red. The image consists of elements of simple drawings of a heart and a house. This indicates that families are the center of society and provide a stable and supporting home for people of all ages. – APP

Footwear exports witness an increase of 21.16 per cent

DNA

ISLAMABAD, May 15 (): Pakistan's footwear exports witnessed an increase of 21.16 pc during the first ten months of financial year (2021-22) as compared with the exports of the corresponding period of last year, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. "Since 2018, the output value of Pakistan's footwear industry has developed rapidly and the export momentum keeps going. To seize this golden opportunity, more investment is required to flow into shoe factories to increase capacity and contribute to the country's exports," said Pakistan Footwear Manufacturers Association (PFMA) Chairman Zahid Hussain. Pakistan exported footwear worth US \$130 million during July-April (2021-22) against the ex-

ports of \$107 million during July-April (2020-21), showing a growth of 21.16 percent, according to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

The chairman underlined that imports of shoes had dropped by an average of 16.2 million pairs per annum over the past three years, and that the decline had been covered by an increase in domestic production. "Existing companies are improving the operation capacity, and new companies are pouring into the footwear industry, creating a bright future for the industry. Pakistan's footwear industry is in a position to expand its exports to \$1 billion by 2027," he introduced.

Moreover, challenges still remain. The availability of many materials, including quality moulds for sole, synthetic materials for upper and quality trims and buckles, is dependent on import.

The skills of middle managers are in need to be enhanced, and a few managers have been trained in operational efficiency and productivity, which keeps the scalability of operations at a low growth rate. In this regard, Zahid Hussain said that the labor cost of Pakistan is almost one-fourth of that of China, which can be a big incentive for Chinese investors. China is shifting its "sunset" industries, including footwear, clothing and toy manufacturing to other countries, and Pakistan is one of its most suitable destinations.

Since 2018, the total import volume of China's footwear products has continued to rise. By 2021, the total import volume of footwear products has reached \$6.126 billion, marking an increase of 10.1% over the same period last year. The chairman believes Pakistan is likely to start exports to China by 2025.

Skilled workers make hydro projects successful: Report

DNA

ISLAMABAD, May 15 (): Skilled workers have a major role in making mega hydro projects successful, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday.

"Integrity, dignity and competence reign supreme. I am fortunate to have good people around me," said outgoing WAPDA Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (Retd) during his farewell visits to four under-construction signature projects of WAPDA. Hussain appreciated the dedication and "execution skills" of WAPDA staff, Chinese and Pakistani consultants, contractors and district administration by making these projects success stories.

The four mega projects include Dasu Hydro-power Project, Mohmand Dam Project, Diamer-Basha Dam and Tarbela 5th Extension. China Gezhouba Group Company (CGGC) in JV is constructing Dasu HPP and Mohmand HPP while Power China is involved in the

construction of Diamer-Basha Dam. Muzammil Hussain appreciated the commitment and dedication of the projects' management in carrying these projects forward. Mr. Hussain was accompanied by the newly posted chairman Naveed Asghar Chaudhry. They held meetings with different stakeholders of the projects including Chinese officials, engineers and workers.

CGCC officials also presented shields to Mr. Hussain and Mr. Chaudhry during their visit to Dasu Power Project. Currently, WAPDA is taking ahead the construction of 10 mega projects at a good pace. These projects, which are scheduled to be completed from 2022 to 2029, will ensure water, food and energy security of Pakistan with cumulative gross water storage capacity of 11.7 million acre feet (MAF) and installed hydel power generation capacity of 11369 megawatts; sufficient to irrigate 3.5 million acres of land and provide 44.7 billion units of green and cheap electricity on the average every year.

DOAM to hold workshop on role of Museums

ISLAMABAD: Lok Virsa in collaboration with Department of Archaeology & Museums (DOAM) is planning to organize a one-day training workshop on the "Role of Museums in Community Development" on May 18 to mark International Museum Day. National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) is a specialized institution that deals with the research, collection, documentation, preservation and dissemination of Pakistan's traditional culture which includes both tangible and intangible heritage, said a press release issued here. Pursuant to its objectives, Lok Virsa has established two national museums of international stature at Islamabad namely Pakistan National Heritage Museum (PNHM) and Pakistan National Monument Museum (PNMM) depicting living cultural traditions and historical heritage of Pakistan presented through three-dimensional creative manner. Professionals working in different museums are invited to participate in the workshop and benefit from the initiative. – APP

PNCA resumes music classes

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) has resumed its music classes after the month of Ramadan ul Mubarak as many students got themselves registered in these courses. Talking to APP on Sunday, official of PNCA Masroor Shah said these courses aimed at exploring and polishing the hidden talent of artistic souls of the young generation. – APP

Chilam Joshi Festival in full swing

ISLAMABAD: A four-day Chilam Joshi festival is in full swing which was started from May 13 (Friday) in Kalash Valley. The festival commemorates the arrival of summer and celebrates the abundance of dairy products during the season. The people of Kalash love music and dance to the beat of drums. Both men and women partake in dancing festivities, where they make circles and enjoy the sound of music. This festival gives an excellent opportunity to celebrate the beginning of summer and to give a message of peace to the world. – APP

Book 'Conversations with my Father' launched

This has been a private matter between myself and my father

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) launched a book titled "Conversations with my Father: Forty years on, a daughter responds" by Moneeza Hashmi attracting a large number of people who are taking keen interest to read about the celebrated poet, Faiz Ahmed Faiz from his daughter's lenses. 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." She also added that "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." Discussing about the relationship, she had with her father, Moneeza held that "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." Moreover, she wondered "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 to 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?" She also felt that these conversation between her and her father could it be easily understood by the readers? She noted that, "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," she concluded. – APP

Briefs

Minister condemns killing of minority people

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah on Sunday strongly condemned killing of two Pakistanis belonging to Sikh community in Peshawar and sought report from Chief Secretary and IG Police of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in to the incident. He said the KP government has miserably failed to protect minorities, said a statement issued here. Such incidents had already taken in the province, he added. The minister said the provincial government and law enforcing agencies should ensure the safety of citizens belonging to the minority community. The killers of Ranjit Singh and Kanwal Singh would be arrested soon as per the directive of the Prime Minister, he added. He expressed condolence with the families of the victims and assured them that the federal government would extend full support to the provincial government in apprehending the culprits. - APP

PNCA to resume Talent Hunt Music edition

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Sunday announced to resume its famous "Talent Hunt" music program by the end of this month. Talking to APP, an official of PNCA Masroor Shah said the institution aims to find singers from the Online Talent Hunt music edition, a popular platform for emerging singers. Through this talent hunt, the PNCA wants to promote weekly competitions among young singers. He said the programme earlier was an initiative to discover melodious voices through audition on weekly basis. The online talent hunt was quite helpful for singers who aspired to showcase their talent but were not finding the right platforms in that regard, said the official. He said that Lok Virsa would continue its efforts to provide opportunities to talented singers. According to official, "it is a new talent program where singers across the country would participate in the competitions in various categories. The categories include, instrumental performance and singing." The winners of the PNCA Talent Hunt would be awarded three awards including "Winner People's Choice", "Winner Jury Award" and "Winner Jury Award." - APP

World Info Society Day to be marked on May 17

ISLAMABAD: World Information Society Day will be marked on May 17 across the globe including Pakistan to remind the world of the vision of the World Summit on the Information Society to build "a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented information society" based on fundamental human rights. World Information Society Day aims to alert people about how information and communication can help improve societies worldwide. World Information Society Day promotes people's awareness of the power of information and communication to build societies in which they can create, access, use and share information and knowledge to achieve their full potential. Organizations such as UNESCO actively take part in the day by inviting people to engage in various activities to promote campaigns centered on this event. The annual observance of World Telecommunication Day, which marks the founding of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) on May 17, 1865, drew attention to the work of ITU and the challenges of global communication. In March 2006, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed May 17 as World Information Society Day to recognize the efforts made to advance communication and ITU's role in helping people connect around the world. The UN's first World Information Society Day took place on Wednesday, 17 May 2006. - APP

ICCI for focusing on Africa to promote trade and exports

M Shakeel Munir said that Pakistan has formulated the 'Look Africa Policy' which should be fully implemented to improve trade relations with African region

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that Africa is a huge market, which still remains untapped and emphasised that the government should focus on African countries to boost its trade and exports. He said this while exchanging views with the Deputy Head of Missions of Morocco, South Africa and Nigeria during their visit to ICCI. Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President & Convener ICCI Diplomatic Committee, Muhammad Naveed Malik & Khalid Chaudhry former Senior Vice Presidents ICCI and others were also present at the occasion. Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that Pakistan has formulated the 'Look Africa Policy' which should be fully implemented to improve trade relations with African region. He said that Pakistan has good potential to export many products to Africa including rice, engineering goods, electrical appliances, textiles, apparel, pharmaceuticals, sports goods, surgical instruments, cutlery, furniture and many more. He said that Pakistan can import many products from African countries that offer



competitive advantage for import. He also briefed the African diplomats about the opportunities of JVs and investment in various sectors of Pakistan's economy for foreign investors and urged that they should play a role to motivate the investors of their respective countries to explore Pakistan for business and investment opportunities. The Deputy Head of Missions of Morocco, South Africa and Nigeria thanked Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President ICCI for sharing useful ideas to further enhance bilateral trade of Pakistan with their respective countries and assured that they would extend all possible cooperation to promote business linkages of private sectors of their respective countries with Pakistani counterparts to take

the bilateral trade and economic relations to higher levels. Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Zafar Bakhtawari former President & Convener ICCI Diplomatic Committee, Muhammad Naveed Malik, Khalid Chaudhry and others also offered useful proposals to promote trade relations of Pakistan with African countries.

SBBWUP official refutes allegations against her

Ms. Zohra Shahzad says her appointment was made purely on merit; alleges that some vested interests are trying to tarnish her reputation

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Reference to a news items published in daily Islamabad POST on May 12, 2022 titled 'Indian education official makes SBBWUP a battleground' it is clarified that the educational credentials of the undersigned have been accepted by the renowned universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and on the basis of same, the undersigned was appointed in the university after appearing in the Selection Board and Syndicate which has its own formal procedure for the public sector

universities. The degrees are by no means challengeable. All the allegations mentioned are a result of revengeful attempt to tarnish the reputation of the undersigned as she (as Registrar of the university) identified and appealed to Governor/Chancellor of KP, Minister for Higher Education KP and Higher Education Department (HED) of KP to take notice against the anarchy and irregularities being made by certain personnel who under the influence of few male "Harasser Officials" (against whom the complaints are available on record), putting dignity of various reputed

officials at stake. The Higher Education Department KP upon various complaints has initiated an inquiry against the responsible personnel regarding the Gross violation of the KP universities Act. Also, attempts are being made by the same group to sabotage the record of their wrongdoings from their personal files for which the credible officers (who were working on the harassment cases) have been intentionally transferred to gain access to the files which has been strongly retaliated by the same officers. The inquiry process and retaliation has created a major hindrance in execution of their ulterior motives and therefore the media forums are now being misused on purpose to exploit the employees (Faculty & Staff), to twist the facts/irregularities.

An appeal has already been made to the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and all the stakeholder authorities to take action against this situation and the responsible culprits must be brought to justice as the working environment in the first and largest Women university of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has become unsafe and the repute of all the officers is at stake.

Amateur artists laud NIFTH

ISLAMABAD: Amateur artists on Sunday lauded the ongoing training courses in folk crafts and folk music organized by National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa). A series of training courses in folk crafts and folk music was started from May 10 with an objective to promote traditional skills and inculcate awareness among the masses, particularly youth/students about the indigenous folk culture of Pakistan. Talking to APP, an artist Fareeha Shah said, "Its a platform where one could portray his or her artistic skills in a better way under the supervision by master artisans." - APP

Public-private partnership in healthcare vital

ISLAMABAD: Public-Private partnership for rendering quality health care services in far flung areas of the country is look more imperative and a way forward to establish more sustainable and strong society. These remarks were expressed by the Director Operation MERF (Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation Pakistan) Syed Ghalib in an exclusive interview with APP. He said that Pakistan amongst the countries where public health services is not enough to cater the demands of fast grow population, ultimately the people left unattended and their minor diseases which leads to chronic ones and later in stages turn into disease, like cirrhosis, cancer and causes of death. Syed Ghalib said the country health care system demands the availability of rapid diagnostic tests and cost effective DAA (direct-acting antiviral) tablets that would

revolutionize the treatment process, such as Hepatitis C screening and treatment etc. Currently, as we know, he said that the government of Pakistan is committed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for eradicating poverty, providing health and education facilities, ensuring gender equality and combating HIV by 2030 in partnership with the World Health Organization and the World Bank. Syed Ghalib emphasized that to meet the challenges of globalization and achieving a prosperous Pakistan in the 21st century we need to promote and practice PPP in providing health care services to improve the health status of our society. Replying to a question about the alarming increase here in cases of TB and HIV, he said that the rising number of TB and HIV cases in Pakistan loudly demands stronger collaboration with the private healthcare services

to tackle TB-HIV co-infection. Today, the world has acknowledged the importance of PPP in health care system and its effectiveness in providing health services to the people, he remarked. To another query about the hurdle and challenges to adopt this system, Syed Ghalib said that PPP are considered to be a successful model of health reform in the health sector of many countries, but in Pakistan policy formulation is so efficient and well directed to bring country health sector on international levels, while, he said the implementation of various components of health sector programme is always a big challenge due to certain reason, including establishing norms, tackling morality and accountability issues, building a legislative framework, defining operational strategies, as well as safeguarding the Consumer Protection Act to safeguard the interest of consumers. - APP

Int'l Day of Lights to be marked

ISLAMABAD: International Day of Lights will be marked on May 16 (Monday) across the globe including Pakistan light plays a central role in our lives on the most fundamental level, through photosynthesis, light is at the origin of life itself. The study of light has led to promising alternative energy sources, lifesaving medical advances in diagnostics technology and treatments, light-speed internet and many other discoveries that have revolutionized society and shaped our understanding of the universe. These technologies were developed through centuries of fundamental research on the properties of light - starting with Ibn Al-Haytham's seminal work, Kitab al-Manazir (Book of Optics), published in 1015 and including Einstein's work at the beginning of the 20th century, which changed the way we think about time and light. The International Day of Light celebrates the role light plays in science, culture and art, education, and sustainable development. - APP

AIOU extends admissions' date of MA/M.Sc programs

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has extended the admissions date of MA/M.Sc programmes offered in Semester Spring, 2022 till June 15 with late fee charges. According to Director Admissions, Syed Zia Ul Hasnain Naqvi, the University has offered the admissions of MA/M.Sc programs last time under the policy of Higher Education Commission, these programs will be closed from next semester, so the admissions date of these programs has been extended to benefit maximum number of students. Nominated banks have

also been instructed to collect fees from students till the new date of admissions. This is the last chance for the students who want to get admission in the two years MA/M.Sc programs, he added. Vice-Chancellor, AIOU Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum has expressed the hope that the aspiring students of the Master's programs will take full advantage of this opportunity. He directed all Regional heads of the University across the country to provide full support and guidance to the students coming in the campuses in the admissions' process. - DNA

Environmental degradation emerging as security threat

"The Ministry of Climate Change will recommend adaptation measures at national level and start mass awareness campaign on it"

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman has said that environmental degradation was emerging as a national security threat for Pakistan as it was paying a disproportionate price for climate change impacts derived by the developed world. Federal Minister for Climate Change in her exclusive talk with APP said the glacial lakes outburst floods and heat-wave were certain incidents that were predicted through advisories released in February by the relevant departments where the last alert was issued by the Ministry of Climate Change. Sherry said the World Bank has mentioned that climate induced disasters were causing 4-6% of the country's GDP which was a huge sum that needed to be preserved through timely interventions. She said the developed world has done injustice and ignored the third



world particularly Pakistan that is bearing the burden of their environment damaging development. She said plantation was necessary but not the only solution to cope with the whooping impacts of global warming, adding, "Adaptation is also necessary

to be spearheaded at the individual and community levels and create awareness among the masses to deal with global warming". Senator Rehman said the country also needed to focus on energy transition to clean energy mix. "The Ministry of Climate Change will recommend adaptation measures at the national level and start mass awareness campaign on it". She added that there was need to bring lifestyle change as the elite of the country was responsible for wasting water graciously which was a matter of serious concern. "Climate mitigation is done by developed countries but the Southern region of the world was focusing on adaptation which is equally important". She informed that the Ministry was engaging with the corporate sector to shift the use of plastic bags and shun over renewable eco-friendly alternatives. - APP

Legendary master Sadquain 'Calligraphy Show' today

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) would hold a 'Calligraphy Show' on May 16 (Monday) by legendary master of Pakistan including beautiful pieces by Sadequain. Sadequain is credited for the renaissance of Islamic Calligraphy in Pakistan. Sadquain first exhibition of calligraphies took place in December 1968 'For the next 15-16 years, a veritable Niagara of Painterly calligraphy flowed from his pen and brush', said a press release issued here. Sadequain was widely praised for his calligraphic style, which is considered iconic by many critics of South Asian art. Sadequain was part of a broader Islamic art movement that emerged independently across North Africa and parts of Asia in the 1950s and known as the Hurufiyya movement. - APP

Exhibition by Rakhshanda attracting people

ISLAMABAD: A solo exhibition titled "In Search of the Miraculous," by Rakhshanda Atawar at satrang gallery attracting a large number of people showcasing artistic work of talented artists. In Search of the Miraculous has been curated by the esteemed curator Aasim Akhtar. The press release while describing Rakhshanda Atawar pays tribute to her work through following words: "The longer we look at Rakhshanda Atawar's work, the more clearly, we see before our eyes, its special power of regeneration - a power that extends to elements located far back, to previously unremarked features that re-emerge under the guise of new findings." Atawar's work is replete with moments of covert and overt anticipation. A complex web of diversity is not only evident within individual paintings but also stretches retrospectively between works that might otherwise appear to be temporal and poles apart, aesthetically. - APP

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UAE: A new nation is born

The unanimous election of His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan as the President of the UAE reaffirms that the nation is determined to continue an ambitious, future-oriented approach with specific, well-thought-out objectives, wherein the torch is passed across generations to enable ushering in new phases, including a knowledge-based economy.

The UAE has established, across the foundation and empowerment phases, its position as an economic, investment oasis offering promising opportunities to the business community, and topping competitiveness indexes, driven by a proactive foreign policy that helped position the nation as a leading financial and logistic hub in the region.

Today, with His Highness Sheikh Mohamed becoming President, the UAE leadership will launch a new phase described by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, as a new birth for the country: "His assumption of the responsibility of the presidency represents a new historical era and a new birth. We look forward to the acceleration of development aimed at consolidating the global sovereignty and pioneering of the Emirates."

This phase will build on past achievements, while continuing to diversify our economy, boost its sustainability, reduce reliance on oil and build active and balanced foreign relations that help achieve the UAE's strategic objectives, launching it into the prosperity phase, which is built around viewing citizens as the true treasure and measure of the country's progress. His Highness' election came as a continuation of a blessed, fast-paced journey to the heights of glory, especially as Sheikh Mohamed has lived through the two past phases serving alongside a forward-looking leader, and inherited the wisdom of the late Founding Father, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, while serving as a supporter of the late Sheikh Khalifa.

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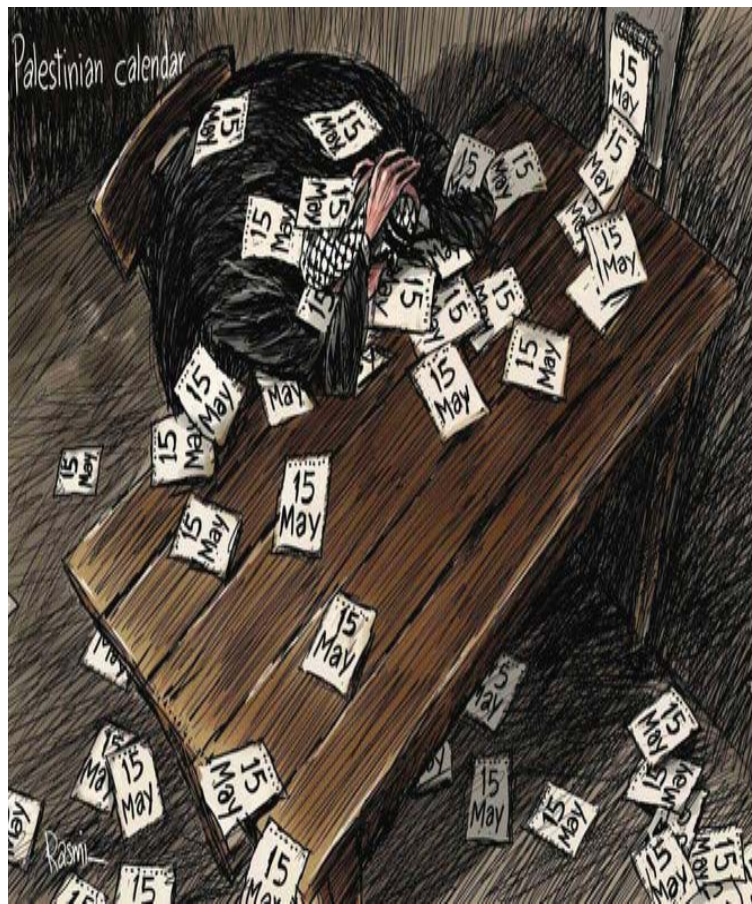
Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 311

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A world within a world

BY MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

The world of Metaverse is gradually gaining momentum. Eventually, we will be able to live in this augmented reality virtual world that will be accessible through our headsets. Immersive gaming has been a part of our society for years now – with the youth and adults enjoying playing games from various genres. The Metaverse, however, is a concept that encapsulates a greater deal of activities that we can perform in the virtual world. In the Metaverse we can purchase real estate, create scenes and games, express our thoughts through avatars, meet with remote colleagues, socialize, shop for real or virtual products, play games, attend events and conferences, and invest in digital artwork. This seems to be akin to a page out of a science fiction book, but this is now a reality. Soon, corporate executives will not leave their offices or their cities and will sit together in the Metaverse in the virtual board room talking to each other's avatars.

Fortunately, or unfortunately, humans were being prepared to accept such a lifestyle in the virtual world when smartphones became a necessity. Today, the smartphone and digital communication is used by students to complete their assignments, by executives to complete and share reports, to attend virtual meetings, to work remotely, and we all remain updated with news and information through news websites and social media. It seems we are already living in another world founded on the principles of digital media, communications, and networking. The physical contact has already become minimal. The Metaverse will send us into the virtual world with our surroundings becoming 3D and giving us the facility to change our theme and avatars. The future is digital, and we must remain prepared for it.

Ignoring the Middle East at one's peril: Turkey plays games in NATO

James Dorsey

For the United States and Europe, the trick will be developing a policy that balances accommodating autocrats', at times, disruptive demands, often aimed at ensuring regime survival, with the need to remain loyal to democratic values amid a struggle over whose values will underwrite a 21st-century world order

Amid speculation about a reduced US military commitment to security in the Middle East, Turkey has spotlighted the region's ability to act as a disruptive force if its interests are neglected.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan set off alarm bells this week, declaring that he was not "positive" about possible Finnish and Swedish applications for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

NATO membership is contingent on a unanimous vote in favour by the organisation's 30 members. Turkey has NATO's second-largest standing army. The vast majority of NATO members appear to endorse Finnish and Swedish membership. NATO members hope to approve the applications at a

summit next month. A potential Turkish veto would complicate efforts to maintain trans-Atlantic unity in the face of the Russian invasion.

Mr. Erdogan's pressure tactics mirror the maneuvers of his fellow strongman, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban. Mr. Orban threatens European Union unity by resisting a bloc-wide boycott of Russian energy. Earlier, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia rejected US requests to raise oil production in an effort to lower prices and help Europe reduce its dependence on Russian energy. The two Gulf states appear to have since sought to quietly backtrack on their refusal.

In late April, France's TotalEnergies chartered a tanker to load Abu Dhabi crude in early May for Europe, the first such shipment in two years. Saudi Arabia has quietly used its regional pricing mechanisms to redirect from Asia to Europe Arab "medium," the Saudi crude that is the closest substitute for the main Russian export blend, Urals, for which European refineries are configured. Mr. Erdogan linked his NATO objection to alleged Finnish and Swedish support for the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which has been designated a terrorist organisation by Turkey, the United States, and the EU. The PKK has waged a decades-long insurgency in southeast Turkey in support of Kurds' national, ethnic, and cultural rights. Kurds account for up to 20 per cent of the country's 84 million population.

Turkey has recently pounded PKK positions in northern Iraq in a military operation named Operation Claw Lock. Turkey is at odds with the United States over American support for Syrian Kurds in the fight against the Islamic State. Turkey asserts that America's Syrian Kurdish allies are aligned with the PKK. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu warned that Turkey opposes a US decision this week to exempt from sanctions against Syria regions controlled by the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). "This is a selective and discriminatory move,"

Mr. Cavusoglu said, noting that the exemption did not include Kurdish areas of Syria controlled by Turkey and its Syrian proxies. Referring to the NATO membership applications, Mr. Erdogan charged that "Scandinavian countries are like some kind of guest house for terrorist organisations. They're even in parliament." Mr. Erdogan's objections relate primarily to Sweden, with Finland risking becoming collateral damage. Sweden is home to a significant Kurdish community and hosts Europe's top Kurdish soccer team that empathises with the PKK and Turkish Kurdish aspirations. In addition, six Swedish members of parliament are ethnic Kurds. Turkey scholar Howard Eissenstat suggested that Turkey's NATO objection may be a turning point. "Much of Turkey's strategic flexibility has come from the fact that its priorities are seen as peripheral issues for its most important Western allies. Finnish and Swedish entry into NATO, in the current context, absolutely not peripheral," Mr. Eissenstat tweeted. The Turkish objection demonstrates the Middle East's potential to derail US and European policy in other parts of the world.

Middle Eastern states walk a fine line when using their potential to disrupt to achieve political goals of their own. The cautious backtracking on Ukraine-related oil supplies demonstrates the limits and/or risks of Middle Eastern brinkmanship. So does the fact that Ukraine has moved NATO's center of gravity to northern Europe and away from its southern flank, which Turkey anchors. Moreover, Turkey risks endangering significant improvements in its long-strained relations with the United States.

Turkish mediation in the Ukraine crisis and military support for Ukraine prompted US President Joe Biden to move ahead with plans to upgrade Turkey's fleet of F-16 fighter planes and discuss selling it newer, advanced F-16 models even though Turkey has neither condemned Russia nor imposed sanctions. Some analysts suggest

Turkey may use its objection to regain access to the United States' F-35 fighter jet program. The US cancelled in 2019 a sale of the jet to Turkey after the NATO member acquired Russia's S-400 anti-missile defence system. Mr. Erdogan has "done this kind of tactic before. He will use it as leverage to get a good deal for Turkey," said retired US Navy Admiral James Foggo, dean of the Center for Maritime Strategy.

A top aide to Mr. Erdogan, Ibrahim Kalin, appeared to confirm Mr. Foggo's analysis. "We are not closing the door. But we are basically raising this issue as a matter of national security for Turkey," Mr. Kalin said, referring to the Turkish leader's NATO remarks. "Of course, we want to have a discussion, a negotiation with Swedish counterparts." Spelling out Turkish demands, Mr. Kalin went on to say that "what needs to be done is clear: they have to stop allowing PKK outlets, activities, organisations, individuals and other types of presence to...exist in those countries."

Mr. Erdogan's brinkmanship may have its limits, but it illustrates that one ignores the Middle East at one's peril. However, engaging Middle Eastern autocrats does not necessarily mean ignoring their rampant violations of human rights and repression of freedoms. For the United States and Europe, the trick will be developing a policy that balances accommodating autocrats', at times, disruptive demands, often aimed at ensuring regime survival, with the need to remain loyal to democratic values amid a struggle over whose values will underwrite a 21st-century world order.

However, that would require a degree of creative policymaking and diplomacy that seems to be a rare commodity. Dr. James M. Dorsey is an award-winning journalist and scholar, a Senior Fellow at the National University of Singapore's Middle East Institute and Adjunct Senior Fellow at Nanyang Technological University's S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies.

We need to show Israel the time for accountability has arrived

Hagai El-Ad

B'Tselem tried in good faith to engage Israel's domestic investigation mechanisms for decades. Over the years, we have made hundreds of applications to relevant authorities for cases of Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces to be investigated, but meaningful accountability was never realised. Six years ago, we concluded that what we were dealing with is not merely a dysfunctional investigation mechanism but an organised, systemic whitewash operation. As a result, we made the decision to continue our work on such killings – but without ever engaging in Israel's so-called "investigations"

The only possible response to the hasty offer Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid made to the Palestinians to conduct "a joint pathological investigation" into the killing of renowned Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh can be rage.

Such "investigations" conducted by Israel serve not to uncover the truth but to bury it, not to establish accountability but to

preserve impunity, not to indict the perpetrators but to protect them.

That the offer for a "joint investigation" into the killing of Abu Akleh came directly from Foreign Minister Lapid – and was later repeated by Prime Minister Naftali Bennett – speaks to the magnitude of Israel's concern about the public relations crisis it is now facing. Such offers for "investigation" and "analysis" are normally left to lower-ranking officials in Israel's whitewash apparatus.

Indeed, Israel only engages in such high-level whitewash if it believes the killing of a Palestinian can damage the country's image. Otherwise, it doesn't even bother with such empty gestures.

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ic whitewash operation. As a result, we made the decision to continue our work on such killings – but without ever engaging in Israel's so-called "investigations". Israel's investigation mechanism is clearly a charade. Even if an investigation into the killing of a Palestinian at the hands of Israeli forces is opened, it almost never conclude with someone being charged. The entire mechanism is a charade because its flaws are, in fact, its essential features – the ones that enable it to deliver impunity. To begin with, the army is tasked with investigating itself. Soldiers are typically interviewed without being challenged, almost no effort is made to collect external evidence, and "investigations" are drawn out for years. On top of all this, even the sham described above is directed only at low-ranking soldiers – those who make the policies that enable soldiers to pull the trigger on Palestinians never face any scrutiny. All this, despite in many cases fatalities being caused not because of any deviations from the policies of the Israeli military but the criminal policies themselves.

Take, for example, the cases of Israeli snipers shooting at unarmed Palestinians at the Gaza fence during the Great March of Return demonstrations. Israel conducted "investigations" into certain specific cases of shooting by snipers. But no one investigated – and no one in Israel will – the rules of engagement themselves.

Israel's military advocate general – the very same person in charge of Israel's military investigations – is tasked with

giving the green light for such policies. Thus, obviously, nobody is being held to account for giving snipers those flagrantly illegal orders.

Israel needs impunity to maintain its apartheid regime. It cannot maintain control over a subjugated population without state violence. Thus it is essential for the regime to provide itself with blanket impunity – while performing what looks like investigations, to appease international expectations.

Impunity paves the way for more killings. Don't fall for Israel's propaganda, its promises to "investigate". Israel will not hold itself to account, just like its apartheid regime won't dismantle itself. International stakeholders who do not call this out simply cast themselves as a cog in Israel's whitewashing machine. The grotesque US pressure on Palestinians to accept a "joint" investigation and the statement by US Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides vaguely "encouraging" an investigation, only demonstrates the extent to which the Biden administration continues to serve as such a cog.

Shireen Abu Akleh once said while it "might not be easy to change reality", she could at least bring "the voice of the people to the world". To keep that voice alive, to honour her legacy and to demand justice, please: Say no to Israeli propaganda, view reality with clarity, and demonstrate to Israel that the time of accountability has finally – even if belatedly – arrived.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

3 soldiers...

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Pak-Afghan border in the Dewagar area of North Waziristan. The military's media wing added that Pakistani troops responded in a 'befitting manner' due to which terrorists suffered heavy casualties, as per intelligence reports. However, during the gunfight, Havaladar Taimoor (resident of Jhelum, age 30 years), Naik Shoaib (resident of Attock, age 38 years) and Sepoy Saqib Nawaz (resident of Sialkot, age 24 years), having fought gallantly, embraced martyrdom, the ISPR added.

PM, Info...

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kept alive by the martyrs, he added. The Prime Minister also expressed condolences with the bereaved families of shaheed children including 4-year-old Anam, 8-year-old Ahsan and 11-year-old Ahmad Hassan. Expressing his resolve to root out the scourge of barbarity, he said that murderers of innocent children had been the enemies of Islam and humanity. He said that they would not rest till the facilitators and culprits behind this heinous act were brought to justice. Meanwhile, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb strongly condemned the suicide blast in Miranshah area of North Waziristan. In a statement, she said that miscreants wanted to disturb the law and order situation but such cowardly acts could not dampen the spirits of the nation. "Sacrifices of security personnel for restoration of law and order in the country will not go in vain," said the minister. The minister expressed her deep felt condolences to the families of security personnel and children martyred in the blast. She prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved families to bear these irreparable losses with fortitude.

Prices of...

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inflation-hit citizens. However, the minister later tweeted from his official account that the decision taken to keep the fuel prices unchanged was for today. He also added that due to changing circumstances and international oil prices, they may have to revisit their decision soon. "Let me amplify what I just said in my presser. The government will not raise POL prices today. But due to changing circumstances and international oil prices, we may have to revisit our decision soon," said the minister. Over the pending talks with the International Monetary Funds (IMF) which is due on May 18th, the minister informed that they would hold a review meeting with the International lender agency and would inform them about the decision taken in this regard (unchanged petrol prices). The minister further said that the friend countries including Saudi Arabia had assured economic cooperation and talks were underway for the extension of the deposited period. He said the Saudis had promised to extend the term of deposits from December, 2022 and also agreed to negotiate an increase in deposits.

Sheikh warns...

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facing the worst economic and political crisis in its history ever since it gained independence in 1948. Rasheed, while addressing a press conference at Faisalabad's Serena Hotel earlier today, said that the incumbent coalition government had become directionless and was unable to handle the situation. "The government should call Nawaz Sharif back now," Rasheed said that if Imran Khan is arrested, the PTI has already devised a strategy to deal with the situation, adding that the country would plunge into a political crisis and would witness a Sri Lanka-like situation. The former minister also criticised MQM-P and the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) for parting ways with the PTI. - DNA

Australia's Andrew Symonds dies in car crash

MONITORING DESK

SYDNEY: Australian cricket was reeling Sunday after swashbuckling former all-rounder Andrew Symonds was killed in a car crash - another tragic blow after the recent deaths of fellow greats Shane Warne and Rod Marsh. The 46-year-old, who played 26 Tests and 198 one-day internationals from 1998 to 2009, was involved in a single-car accident outside Townsville in Queensland state on Saturday night. Police said emergency services attempted to revive him, but he died from his injuries after the car left the road and rolled. Pictures published by the Brisbane Courier-Mail showed a vehicle on its roof and skid marks on the road. "We are still in shock - I'm just thinking of the two kids," his tearful wife Laura told the news-



paper, referring to their young children. "He was the most laid-back person. Nothing stressed him out." Cricket Australia chairman Lachlan Henderson said the sport had lost "another of its very best". "Andrew was a generational talent who was instrumental in Australia's success at World Cups and as part of Queensland's rich cricket history," he added. "He was a cult figure to many who was treasured by his fans and friends." Symonds' fatal

crash comes just months after the deaths of fellow Australian greats Warne and Marsh, who both died unexpectedly from heart attacks. "Unfortunately I've been here too often this year under these circumstances. I actually can't quite believe it, to be honest," former Australia captain Mark Taylor told Channel Nine. "Another tragic day for cricket." The larger-than-life Symonds was hugely popular, not only for his hard-hitting approach to the game but also for his easy-going personality. He was widely considered one of the most skilled all-rounders Australian cricket has seen, bowling both off-spin and medium pace, while playing many match-winning hands with his explosive middle-order batting. Symonds was also a top-rate fielder and was a key part of Australia's back-to-back 50-over World Cup triumphs in 2003 and 2007.

Symonds: Australian great loved by teammates

SYDNEY: Andrew Symonds, who died on Saturday night in a car crash aged 46, was instantly recognisable on the cricket field with a mop of dreadlocks poking out from his baggy green cap and lips gleaming with white zinc cream. A hulking presence at 6ft 2in (1.87m) with a grin as broad as his shoulders, he was a supremely talented all-rounder equally at home bowling spin or lively medium-pace. Despite his size, Symonds was a lithe and athletic presence on the ground, with safe bucket-like hands and a laser throw that saw him rated one of the game's greatest fielders. But he was at his most destructive with a bat in his hands. Symonds - nicknamed "Roy" - played 26 Tests and 198 50-over

games for Australia in an international career spanning more than a decade, from 1998 until 2009. A pivotal member of Australia's 2003 and 2007 ODI World Cup-winning sides, Symonds took 133 wickets and scored 5,088 runs at an average of 39.75 in that format. He passed three figures six times in the 50-over game and fifty on 30 more occasions, with a top score of 156 against New Zealand in 2005. In Tests, mostly batting at number six, he scored 1,462 runs at a healthy average of 40.61, with two hundreds and 10 fifties. Symonds was used only as an occasional bowler in the five-day game, taking just 24 wickets. Symonds accused spinner Harbhajan Singh of calling him a "monkey" during an ill-tempered third day.

Spurs edge past Burnley to move into fourth place

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Harry Kane's penalty saw off a stubborn Burnley side as Tottenham moved above Arsenal into fourth place and kept the Claret's survival hopes in the balance. On a tense afternoon in north London with so much at stake at both ends of the table, Kane's spot-kick in first-half stoppage time proved enough to give his side three vital points in their bid for Champions League football. Spurs move two points clear of the Gunners and will stay above them going into the final day of the season

unless their north London rivals beat Newcastle at St James' Park on Monday. Burnley stay 17th and could fall into the relegation zone later on Sunday if Leeds beat Brighton. The Claret's had to survive some intense early pressure but began to find their way into the game before it swung on Tottenham's penalty, awarded on the stroke of half-time. Davinson Sanchez's attempt to flick on a ball in the Burnley box saw the ball brush against Ashley Barnes' outstretched arm. Referee Kevin Friend did not spot the incident and Harry Kane went close to turning in a Ryan Sessegnon pull-back as play continued,

before VAR intervened. After consulting his monitor, Friend pointed to the spot and Kane made no mistake, planting his penalty into the bottom corner. That was not the end of Burnley's threat, however. Claret's keeper Nick Pope made two brilliant saves from Son Heung-min after the break to keep the game in the balance, and his side almost levelled when Ashley Barnes fired against the post. By the end, the home fans were imploring Friend to blow the final whistle as Burnley pumped balls into their box in the closing seconds, and they got their wish as Spurs held on for an important victory.

Bastianini wins French MotoGP for third win

LE MANS, France: Enea Bastianini grabbed his third MotoGP victory in seven races this season as he took the French Grand Prix on Sunday. The Italian, riding a Gresini Ducati, cruised home 2.718 sec ahead of Australian Jack Miller on a factory Ducati. Bastianini overtook compatriot Francesco Bagnaia in the late stages when the factory Ducati rider made an error. Bagnaia reacted to his first mistake by at once making another, falling off his bike as he tried to hit back in the 20th lap.

At one stage there had been a three-way battle for first, but Joan Mir rode his Suzuki off the track in the 13th lap, managed to steer the bike back onto the tarmac but then immediately fell off. "I'm really happy with this race because this victory is unexpected," said Bastianini. "During the race I saw that my rhythm was really good." Spaniard Alex Espargaro, on an Aprilia, was third after holding off championship leader Fabio Quartararo over the closing laps. "I knew Fabio was behind me but I knew it was difficult for him to overtake me," said Espargaro. "The race was about not making mistakes." - APP

Djokovic's 1,000th career win sets up Garros replay in Rome final

ROME: World number one Novak Djokovic took his place in the Italian Open final on Saturday by claiming his 1,000th career win in straight sets over Norway's Casper Ruud 6-4, 6-3 in Rome. Djokovic will face Monte Carlo Masters champion Stefanos Tsitsipas in Sunday's final, the Serb's fourth in as many years in the Italian capital and he basked in the warm applause of a crowd for whom he always enjoys playing. "If I can pick the two places in the world where I would want to celebrate the thousandth win it's Djokovic said in a cake in honour of the milestone. "Let's go for another thousand." Djokovic is chasing a sixth title at the Foro Italico ahead of Roland Garros later this month and with number 10 Ruud on his way to a 12th final at one of his favourite venues. The 34-year-old has already secured a record-extending 370th week as world number one thanks to his straight sets victory over by Felix Auger-Aliassime on Friday. And after racing into a rapid 4-0 lead in the first set he never looked back, Ruud playing some fun tennis and winning entertaining rallies but never really offering the impression he could overhaul Djokovic. The second set was as routine as it gets, Djokovic breaking Ruud in game eight and then dispatching his opponent at the first opportunity two games later. "I thought I played really, really well in the first four and last four games of the match. Let's hope I can take that form into tomorrow's final," added Djokovic in a courtside interview. Djokovic's clash with Tsitsipas will be a rematch of their final at last year's French Open, a five-set thriller eventually won by the Serb.

"He's definitely in form. These last few years he's been one of the top two, three clay court players.... I can expect a big battle on the court but I'm ready for it." Greek world number five Tsitsipas is in the final after beating Alexander Zverev 4-6, 6-3, 6-3 in an entertaining last four battle. Ons Jabeur will face Iga Swiatek in the women's final after winning a thrilling clash with Daria Kasatkina 6-4, 1-6, 7-5. Tunisia's Jabeur became the first Arab or African player to claim a WTA 1000 title with her stunning victory in Madrid last weekend, and now she has the chance to make more history against Swiatek after another glorious comeback win on centre court. Having won the first set in fairly comfortable fashion world number seven Jabeur was clattered from pillar to post by unseeded Russian Kasatkina. Having levelled the match Kasatkina then looked a certain winner and had match point on her own serve in game 10 of the third set. However Jabeur saved the point and won that and the next two games to book her place in the final alongside Swiatek, who looked in unstoppable form in beating Aryna Sabalenka in straight sets 6-2, 6-1. - APP

Charlo knocks out Castano to claim undisputed crown

LOS ANGELES: Jermell Charlo knocked out Argentina's Brian Castano to become the first undisputed super welterweight champion in history on Saturday. Charlo, who fought to a controversial draw against Castano last year, battered the South American into submission in the 10th round of a classic battle in Los Angeles. Charlo, the reigning WBC, WBO and IBF champion, earned Castano's WBO title with the win at the open-air Dignity Health Sports Park arena. The 31-year-old Charlo sent Castano to the canvas twice in the 10th round just as he had begun to get on top of a hard-fought battle that saw the two men share the opening rounds. A crunching right hook to the body stunned Castano and Charlo followed with a left hook to the head that sent the previously undefeated Argentinian crumpling to the canvas. With Castano unsteady on his feet,

Charlo moved in for the kill. A powerful left jerked Castano's head back violently and another punishing left to the body sent him to the deck for the final time. "This is unbelievable," Charlo said. "I gave it my all and that was the end result of it. This was nerve-wracking. It felt like my first fight, where you get nervous. I had ants in my pants. "I knew Castano was going to give it his all, and I trained very hard. I was in great shape," added Charlo, who improves to 35-1-1 (19 knockouts). Charlo's win elevates him to an exclusive club of fighters. He is only the seventh boxer to hold all four belts from the major sanctioning bodies - WBC, WBA, IBF and WBO - at the same time. The six men to do it before are Bernard Hopkins (middleweight),



Terence Crawford (super lightweight), Oleksandr Usyk (cruiserweight), Josh Taylor (super lightweight) and Saul 'Canelo' Alvarez (super middleweight). Charlo and Castano's first clash in Texas last July ended in a split decision draw, with one judge scoring it 117-111 for Charlo, another 114-113 for Castano, and the other 114-114. On Saturday, it looked as if both men were unwilling to risk leaving it to the judge's cards again in a fight that erupted from the opening bell. - APP



LONDON: West Ham United's players clearing the ball away in a Premier League match against Manchester City FC. - DNA

Devaluation of money and its consequences

ZAHEER AHMED

Money is a commodity which is used as medium of economic exchange. It is accepted by both buyer and seller. Money is an amount paid against the value of any particular item it can be overvalued or devalued. Current valuation is measured against currencies as foreign exchange. Like PKR against USD. Currency is overvalued when one country has more resources and sources of income. Like Developed Countries UAE and Saudi Arabia. They have lump sum

amount of crude oil. However, it devalues when country has less resources, more printing of notes, and high inflation rates. Like Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. They have less resources but they printed

"The exports were fallen by 53582 and imports were fallen to 66751 in FY 2022."

more money which caused hyperinflation. If the currency is overvalued it negatively impacts on the Balance of Payments (BoP) of any country. It leads to increase in imports and decrease in exports.

It happens as the commodities become expensive in international markets. The fall in exports decreases the production of economy and it impacts GDP adversely. However, the devaluation of

money strengthens the BoP as imports are reduced and exports are increased. It happens because the commodities become cheaper in international market. The overall demand

rises which leads to the more production. It favors GDP and creates the employment. When unemployment ratio is low and consumption is high it leads to the high inflation rate.

To avoid inflation government makes policies like, rise the interest rates and reduces the borrowings. It helps to control consumption and inflation but it creates unemployment. Currently, in Pakistan value of money has declined. The rates of USD are increased against PKR. Balance of Payments in unfavorable, unemployment ratio is high, GDP is declining, Inflation rate is high. The reason of the peak in inflation is rise in

the international prices of oil. The other reason for the decline in employment ratio, BoP is les foreign Direct Investments (FDI's). The main reason is political unrest in economy.

As per the world bank the GDP of Pakistan in 2020 was 263.7 USD. The inflation rate as per State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) was 6.8% in 2019, and it ended at 8.9% in 2021. The Balance of Payment shows that the exports were 55145 and imports were 74340 in FY 2018. The exports were fallen by 53582 and imports were fallen to 66751 in FY 2022. -The writer is a student at SZABIST Islamabad

Your game...

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tactics to avoid presenting a report card to the people over his performance. It is simply because, she added, he has no performance to put before the masses. On the alleged life threats to Imran's life, she said: "We don't want you to die, we want you to live to see Nawaz Sharif's progress." At the same time, Maryam asked Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah to find the video Imran is talking about to confirm the claims and provide ample security to the former premier. She also took Imran to task for his criticism of the government over rising inflation and other issues. "If he wants to put the blame for his four-year lack of performance on us, we won't let that happen." In fact, by doing so, she added, Imran Khan is presenting a charge-sheet against himself. Maryam also mocked the PTI chief for saying he had blocked the cellphone numbers of those representing the establishment, saying: "I am certain that they have blocked your mobile number and you are now the wrong number in the eyes of the masses." Talking about the PTI's foremost demand of holding early elections, she said: "Now elections will be held when our leader [Nawaz Sharif] will let us know from London."

Bilawal slams...

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It's not a foreign conspiracy, it was a democratic action. It was the struggle of PPP workers, it was the success of Constitution and parliamentary democracy," Bilawal said. Bilawal said it was the PPP's efforts that led to the formation of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) - an alliance of former opposition parties. "Forgetting our political differences, together with other parties, we formed the PDM and on September 20, 2020, when we laid the basis for PDM, we had clearly said we would do long marches and protests and that we would also struggle inside parliament and send the PTI government home through a vote of no-confidence," Bilawal recalled. He said at first PPP's allies did not agree on an in-house change but "in politics you have to convince everyone and it is the leader's responsibility to show the way," Bilawal said.

Khan asks...

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justice on his behalf. Addressing a jalsa in Faisalabad, Khan referred to a statement he had issued a day ago in Sialkot, where he had claimed that he had recorded a video of the characters behind the "conspiracy" against his government, and if something happens to him, it will be released. Khan had said a "conspiracy" was being hatched to take his life - and despite knowing about it earlier, he has now enough evidence to confirm it. Reiterating his belief that there was a US-backed plan that made the no-confidence motion against his government successful, Khan on Sunday said that he already knew that plotting related to his ouster was taking place behind closed doors. He then questioned the incumbent coalition government whether it was capable enough to take care of the prevailing situation, referring to the rising price of the dollar against the Pakistani rupee and the ensuing inflation in the country.

Turkey lays...

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seeking leverage but speaking out especially about Sweden's support for the PKK Kurdish militant group, deemed a terrorist group by Turkey, the European Union and the United States. Finland confirmed on Sunday that it would apply for NATO membership and Sweden is expected to follow suit, in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However Turkey's concerns may pose an obstacle, as any decision on NATO enlargement requires unanimous approval by all 30 member states. "There absolutely needs to be security guarantees here. They need to stop supporting terrorist organizations," Cavusoglu told Turkish reporters in Berlin. He added that Swedish and Finnish bans on exporting of some of their defence sector goods to Turkey must end.

Briefs

PIAF wants exports on sustainable growth

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front on Sunday called for controlling trade deficit which has widened by almost 65 percent to \$39.290 billion in July-April 2021-22, stressing the need for putting the economy on a balanced and sustainable growth trajectory, addressing the underlying structural vulnerabilities.

PIAF senior vice chairman Nasir Hameed and vice chairman Javed Siddiqi stressed the need for building on gains on the ease of doing business front, which requires not just the capacity development in key public institutions, but also a continuous dialogue with relevant stakeholders to ensure smooth implementation, he added.

Referring to a report, Nasir Hameed said that the country's imports during July-April (2021-22) totalled \$65.537 billion as against \$44.731 billion during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 46.51 percent. The exports and imports data revealed that the imports in April were \$6.679 billion as compared to \$6.407 billion in March 2022 showing an increase of 4.25 percent and by 27.41 percent as compared to \$5.242 billion in April 2021.

Russia artist is 76-year-old voice of protest on Ukraine

SAINT PETERSBURG: Yelena Osipova barely slept ahead of Russia's pomp-filled Victory Day celebrations on May 9. The 76-year-old artist was up late, making placards to protest about the conflict in Ukraine. But the moment she stepped out of her home in Saint Petersburg on her way to demonstrate, two unknown men snatched the work from her and ran off.

"It was upsetting. I'd worked half the night and really liked those placards," the white-haired painter told AFP. "It's obvious that it was an organised attack." Indefatigable as ever, within an hour, the tiny, stooped woman, who moves with difficulty, already had a new poster and was heading out again to protest. Osipova is well-known in her home town. She has been called the "conscience of Saint Petersburg," Russia's second city, after two decades spent publicly opposing the rule of President Vladimir Putin.

Since the Kremlin's forces rolled into Ukraine, she has also become a symbol of Russians standing up against the conflict. Footage of her frequent detentions by riot police has been widely circulated on social media. - APP

Crisis-hit Sri Lanka lifts curfew for Buddhist festival

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan authorities lifted a nationwide curfew Sunday for an important Buddhist festival, but celebrations were muted as the island nation's new premier struggled to find his footing and tackle a worsening economic crisis.

A nationwide stay-home order has been in place for most of the week after mob violence left nine dead and over 225 wounded, sparked by attacks on peaceful demonstrators by government loyalists. Protesters across the Buddhist-majority nation have for weeks demanded the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa over Sri Lanka's worst-ever economic crisis. Shortages of food, fuel and medicines, along with record inflation and lengthy blackouts, have brought severe hardships to the country's 22 million people. Sunday marks Vesak, the most important religious event on Sri Lanka's calendar, which celebrates Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. The government has declared a two-day holiday and announced it was lifting the curfew for the day without saying when or whether it would be reimposed. - APP

Shahbaz lauds Canada's 'invaluable support' to Pak

Pakistan and Canada established bilateral diplomatic relations in 1947, shortly after Pakistan's independence, and the relationship had grown from strength to strength over the decades

DNA

OTTAWA: Pakistan's Acting High Commissioner to Canada Mr. Shahbaz Malik has expressed the confidence that bilateral relations between Pakistan and Canada would further expand in days ahead to include a full spectrum of political, economic, security and cultural arenas for the mutual benefit of both countries and their people. He said that Pakistan and Canada established bilateral diplomatic relations in 1947, shortly after Pakistan's independence, and the relationship had grown from strength to strength over the decades. He said both Pakistan and Canada continue to cooperate on bilateral and multilateral fora due to a commonality of views on a number of global challenges like peace and security, climate change and multilateralism. He lauded Canada's "invaluable humanitarian support to Pakistan through the Covid-19 pandemic".



Mr. Shahbaz Malik made this statement while addressing a gathering of members of the Pakistani diaspora, local dignitaries, and members of diplomatic corps, including high commissioners and ambassadors, invited to a Qawwali performance organized by the Pakistan High Commission in collaboration with the Delegation of Ismaili Imam in Canada. The event was dedicated

to the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the diplomatic relationship between Pakistan and Canada as well as 75th Independence Day of Pakistan falling this year. Various Canadian Senators and parliamentarians as well as Mr. Paul Thoppil, Assistant Deputy Minister, Global Affairs Canada, and Dr. Mahmoud Eboob, AKDN Representative to Canada, also attended the function.

Welcoming the guests to the event, Pakistan's Acting High Commissioner Mr. Shahbaz Malik observed that Pakistan at this significant juncture of our bilateral relations between Pakistan and Canada, was looking forward to expanding these ties to cover political, economic, security and cultural fields. He underlined the importance of cultural linkages between people and their role in

strengthening bilateral relations and described the Qawwali event as an effort to introduce the Canadians to Pakistan's vibrant music and culture. He told the guests Qawwali as a traditional form of Sufi music and poetry had gained considerable global audience and recognition due to a deep spiritual message it conveyed to the listeners. He also thanked Dr. Eboob and the AKDN

team for their generous collaboration in arranging the event. He also recalled AKDN's historic association with Pakistan, particularly the role of His Highness Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III as the first President of All-India Muslim League as well as being a comrade of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah during the freedom struggle for Pakistan.



SHUSHA: Folk artists of brotherly Pakistan participated in "Kharibulbul" International Folklore Festival which was held in Shusha, Azerbaijan. - DNA

Rising current account deficit a serious blow to rupee

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Friends of Economic and Business Reforms (FEBR) on Sunday urged the government to control the freefall of the local currency against the US dollar, as rising current account deficit is a serious blow to the exchange rate while the fear of higher demand of dollars further exacerbated with the information of the SBP that the county would need dollars to repay loans. FEBR President Kashif Anwar was of the view that

State Bank of Pakistan will have to remain vigilant in this regard. Besides this, the SBP and the government also need to intervene and come up with policy reforms to control depreciation of rupee which is becoming more and more valueless. He said that it was unfortunate that Pakistan had announced to start its financial transaction with several countries under currency swap agreement some eight years back in 2013 aiming at controlling its import bill and balance of payment, but no implementation is seen so far.

Israeli use of force at Palestinian journalist's funeral 'shocking': UN

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Human Rights chief, Michelle Bachelet has expressed shock over Israeli authorities' use of force at the funeral of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh and called for a prompt and transparent probe into her killing. "I am following with deep distress events in the occupied West Bank, including in East Jerusalem," Ms. Bachelet, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, said in a statement on Saturday. Her call for a transparent probe comes in the wake of the killing of Ms. Abu Akleh, the correspondent for Al-Jazeera, who was fatally shot on Wednesday while covering an Israeli raid in Israeli-occupied West Bank. She was buried in East Jerusalem on Friday and huge crowds turned out for her funeral. The High Commissioner issued a statement saying she was following "with deep distress" the events in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. "Footage of Israeli police attacking mourners at the funeral procession of journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in East Jerusalem on Friday 13 May was shocking. Reports indicate that at least 33 people were injured," she said.

Ms. Bachelet said the Israeli use of force, which was being filmed and broadcast live, appeared to be unnecessary and must be promptly and transparently investigated. "There must be accountability for the terrible killing not just of Shireen Abu Akleh but for all the killings and serious injuries in the occupied Palestinian territory," she said. The UN rights chief reported that 48 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli security forces so far this year. The latest death occurred on Saturday when a young man called Walid al-Sharif, succumbed to injuries sustained during clashes last month at the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem. "As I have called for many times before, there must be appropriate investigations into the actions of Israeli security forces," Ms. Bachelet said. "Anyone found responsible should be held to account with penal and disciplinary sanctions commensurate to the gravity of the violation. This culture of impunity must end now." The killing of Ms. Abu Akleh has sent shockwaves across the globe, and UN officials have been among those calling for an investigation. The journalist was shot even though she wore a vest that identified her as a member of the press corps. Her producer also was wounded. The UN Security Council issued a statement on Friday strongly condemning her killing, reiterating that journalists should be protected as civilians. - APP

Pak to build solar panels in collaboration with China

"The manufacturing of the solar panels locally will make it affordable for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to install these systems in their homes and factories," he added

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will manufacture solar panels locally in collaboration with China in Special Economic Zones (SEZs). This will help to lower the cost of solar panels as well as enhancing energy resources, Gwadar Pro reported on Saturday quoting Amjad Hussein, a renewable energy expert. China is the leader in solar technology and Pakistan could take benefit of it for meeting the country's needs in Power sector, Amjad Hussein said while talking to Gwadar Pro. He said, "It will lower its cost for local population and will help create job opportunities. Imported solar panels are costly, despite tax and duties exemption. Therefore, it would be better for us to manufacture our own solar panels in Pakistan." "The manufacturing of the solar panels locally will make it affordable for the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

to install these systems in their homes and factories," he added. According to solar experts, an area needs



a minimum of four hours of peak sunlight in order to produce electricity that is economical. In this regard, Pakistan is the most

blessed country that has sunlight most of the areas for more than 300 days, and that too with 7 to 8 peak hours of sunlight. The unbearable electricity crises in Pakistan have greatly affected not only the daily lives of people but businesses and industries as well. Although, since the past couple of years, the government has attempted to resolve the issue of load shedding. But the gap in the demand and the production of electric energy is so vast that it cannot be covered with the current electric energy production sources alone. The Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has devised a plan to increase the existing 9,406 megawatts (MW) to 20,591 MW by the year 2028-29. A major chunk of new supply would come from Diamer-Bhasha dam with 4,800 MW capacity and Dasu Hydropower Project with 4,300 MW, which is being built on the Indus river. Another big project called Mohmand Dam with 800 MW capacity is being constructed on the Swat river.

India records 2,487 new Covid cases

NEW DELHI: India's COVID-19 tally rose to 43,121,599 on Sunday with 2,487 new cases registered during the past 24 hours, showed the health ministry's latest data. Besides, 13 deaths from the pandemic registered across the country since Saturday morning took the total death toll to 524,214. There are still 17,692 active COVID-19 cases in the country, a fall of 404 during the past 24 hours. So far, 42,579,693 people have been successfully cured and discharged from hospitals, including 2,878 discharged during the past 24 hours. - APP

Ukraine youth seek respite from war where they can

LVIV, UKRAINE: Saturday night was always time for the trendy youth of Lviv to sip cocktails on the terrace or lose themselves in the rhythms of the basement DJ at "People Place". Yet while the nightlife on offer to urban cool cats ostensibly caters to typical young adult tastes, some customers are in contrast seeking refuge from the war on their doorstep which has shattered normality.

In almost three months of conflict, Lviv, some 70 kilometres (45 miles) from the Polish border, has not experienced the destruction of large swathes of Ukraine's east. Yet the city has just suffered its first air strike in more than a week - and the shadow of the war hangs heavy over a city of some 700,000 which has seen major inflows of refugees from areas hit by fighting. Saturday night is therefore a chance for young residents to seek respite where they can and enjoy the rising temperatures of early summer while teasing out a semblance of pre-war "normality" in clubs, eateries and watering holes.

Cradling a Spritz cocktail at "People Place", 25-year-old Bohdan Sharhulenk drinks in a moment's calm a month on from his own arrival in Lviv after the hellish experience of seeing his southern hometown of Mykolaiv, near the frontline, bombed. "It's very hard to have a normal life when you know your friends are fighting with the Russian aggressor," he explains, dragging nervously on a cigarette. But, he adds, "it's important to party, your mind can relax. "Once, I danced a bit of techno." Since his arrival in town he has spent several evenings with a clutch of acquaintances from across the country - most of that time spent in houses or apartments as the city is subject to an 11 pm curfew.

Sat nearby at the same venue around a bouquet of tulips are Sofya Romanuyk and Marta Yavorska, both 24. They are still coming to terms with what they have experienced and their displacement. Romanuyk, neatly made up and elegantly dressed, says in the early days of the Russian offensive in late February she was so shocked she didn't wash her hair for days. "Psychologists say that for the first 21 days, it's very hard to live in war, and then it becomes normal," she explains. Now, I "try to enjoy the good things: just to sit in a cafe, eat, drink, meet friends" - though she's in no mood to party. - APP

Shanghai to promote business resumption in stages

SHANGHAI: China's financial hub Shanghai will gradually reopen businesses such as shopping malls, vegetable markets and hair salons from Monday after weeks of closed-off management to ward off COVID-19, the city's vice mayor told a media briefing Sunday. Shanghai has been vigorously promoting the opening of business outlets and the return of personnel to ensure supply of daily necessities, said vice mayor Chen Tong. Commercial outlets such as shopping malls, department stores, supermarkets, convenience stores and pharmacies will gradually resume in-store operations in an orderly manner, while vegetable markets and hair salons will gradually resume on-site business with limited capacity, Chen added. - APP

Briefs

Chairman Senate felicitates UAE President

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani has felicitated HRH Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan on being elected as the President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Sadiq Sanjrani expressed hope that under his leadership the UAE would continue to prosper and play its positive role for lasting peace in the region and beyond, said a press release issued here on Sunday.

Gwadar's 300 MW coal power plant to end energy scarcity

ISLAMABAD: The long-standing vagaries of the port city of Gwadar due to growing energy scarcity would end by October, 2023 after the completion of the 300-megawatts coal-fired power plant. The 300-megawatt (MW) coal-fired Gwadar Power Plant would cater the needs of some 150,000 local people by the end of 2023 under the 2050 Master Plan of Gwadar, said an official source while sharing exclusive updates of the project. The power plant of an independent power producer was one of the key energy projects under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he added.

The project aimed at improving reliability on local power supply that would help gradually solve the problems in current economic development and urban construction in Gwadar region, which was being restricted by the shortage of power. "We are currently spending millions of dollars per annum to generate electricity from diesel generators. I hope the plant would be operationalized soon to solve the port's power scarcity issues.

The power plant is of great significance to deepening the energy cooperation between China and Pakistan, boosting the development of the Belt and Road Initiative, improving the overall power structure of Balochistan, and promoting local economic development in Gwadar Port. All major projects under CPEC in Gwadar, including Gwadar Power Plant, the New Gwadar International Airport Project, the China Pak Friendship Hospital, China-Pak Technical and Vocational Institute in Gwadar, the Gwadar East-bay Expressway Project, Gwadar Free Zone, and Gwadar Port would become a shining pearl in the region. - APP

Trust deficit equally detrimental for both Pak, Afghanistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Trust deficit toward Pakistan was still an issue among a certain segment of the Afghan society, said former Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain. He was delivering a talk at a session titled 'Tales of Afghanistan's Diplomacy and Engagement with the World and with Pakistan'.

The session was jointly organized by the Pak-Afghan Youth Forum (PAYF) and the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) under the former institute's series titled 'Stories We Live By'. Reflecting on the prevalent distrust among various segments of the Afghan society, Ambassador Abrar Hussain said that the governments and the people in both the countries had to realize that such a gap was equally detrimental for both Pakistan and Afghanistan. He said that both countries shared a rich history of strong socio-cultural ties and that the increased cross-border movement of people and goods in the past years, though criticized for wrongful reasons, was an important part of history and pointed towards a healthy level of engagement.

Palestinians fear another 'Nakba' amid Israel's policies

On 15th of May, Palestinians all over the globe commemorate Nakba Day in memory of the almost total destruction of their presence in their homeland of Palestine

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: After seventy four years of illegal creation of Israel on the occupied land of Palestine, the Palestinians are facing the threat of another Nakba (destruction) that will completely destroy Palestine, if Israel is allowed to continue with its illegal colonial policies against Palestinian people. On 15th of May, Palestinians all over the globe commemorate Nakba Day in memory of the almost total destruction of their presence in their homeland of Palestine, said a statement issued here by the Embassy of Israel on Palestinian land in 1948 consti-

tutes a grave historical injustice to the Palestinian people that persists until now. As Seventy four years have passed since the Nakba of 1948, the year that marked the expulsion and exodus of the Palestinian people. "The Nakba of yesterday is the ongoing reality of today. Palestinians are denied all basic human rights as Israel continues to adopt the policies of forcible transfer, oppression and humiliation to pave the way for the construction of more Israeli settlements and settlers in occupied Palestine". The continuous vicious colonial attempts to erase the Palestinian identity, to ethnically cleanse the people of Palestine and to humiliate their dignity at the hands of Israel was not only one dark chapter in

history, but a daily life under humiliation, oppression and occupation for each and every Palestinian, it added. "It's time for this dark chapter to end and for a new promising one to begin. It's time for justice in Palestine". During the Nakba ("catastrophe"), Israel destroyed 531 Palestinian towns and villages and committed at least 33 massacres, and more than 800,000 Palestinians were uprooted and expelled to live as refugees at the mercy of others in refugee camps and in diaspora. Since 1948, Israel has employed deliberate and systematic acts of violence, colonialism and destruction at the expense of the Palestinian people, their rights, lands, and resources. "Fun-

damentalist Zionism is bent on pursuing these policies unilaterally to superimpose 'Greater Israel' on historical Palestine". More than seven million Palestinian refugees reside in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in exile. Palestinian refugees have suffered for far too long, and it is time that their plight is recognized by the international community and resolved in accordance with international law and conventions, including the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948), the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

APNS concerned about missing journalist

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The APNS expresses its profound concern on the disappearance of Mr Zahid Abbas Malik senior journalist of Dunya Group of newspapers. The APNS stated that the kidnapping of Mr Zahid Abbas by unknown miscreants is highly deplorable. The APNS regretted that journalists are being continuously harassed and threatened. It is unfortunate that all such acts have so far remained unchecked. The APNS urged upon the Punjab government to take immediate notice of the incident and take all measures to recover Mr Zahid Abbas without delay.

Pakistan reports third polio case

ISLAMABAD: A one-year-old boy has been paralyzed by wild polio in North Waziristan, in the third case reported from Pakistan this year. According to official sources, the child had an onset of paralysis on 2nd May in Miranshah, while the case was confirmed by the Pakistan National Polio Laboratory at the National Institute of Health (NIH), Islamabad on Saturday 14th May.

"Another child will live with lifelong physical disabilities because of this preventable disease. As a country, we must understand the human cost of not finishing polio from Pakistan. Every polio case is a huge tragedy," Health Minister Abdul Qadir Patel said.

"In the absence of any cure for poliovirus, the only way to protect children from lifelong physical disabilities is to vaccinate them in each campaign," the health minister added. "Since January, we have taken emergency measures in the southern districts of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa to save children from wild polio and these measures have been further extended and intensified, he added.

The six districts in southern Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa had been identified by the polio programme as the area most at risk and an emergency action plan was initiated that is allowing the programme to reach more children than before. - APP

'Turkey not blocking Sweden, Finland bids'

BERLIN: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Sunday that Turkey was not blocking membership bids by Sweden and Finland and voiced confidence at resolving Ankara's stated concerns. "Turkey made it clear that its intention is not to block membership," Stoltenberg told reporters virtually after alliance foreign ministers met in Berlin.

He said he was in touch with Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu after Ankara alleged that the Nordic nations were home to "terrorists", a reference to Kurdish separatists. "I am confident we'll be able to find common ground, consensus on how to move on membership issues," Stoltenberg said. - APP

President felicitates Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi Sunday congratulated Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan on his election to the office of President of the United Arab Emirates. In his felicitation message, the president said Pakistan highly valued its brotherly relations with the UAE and expressed the confidence that under Sheikh Muhammad's leadership, these bilateral ties between the two countries would grow further, Press Wing of the Awan e Sadr said in a press release. He said that UAE would further witness progress under the leadership of the newly elected president. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Members of COSA and COSALA posing for a group picture after their hiking trip and then brunch at Monal restaurant. In the inset Qaisar Malik, Head of Protocol of Monal gets appreciation certificate on the occasion. COSA and COSALA are the bodies of Defence Attaches and their wives based in Islamabad. - DNA

PTI seeks special security for Imran Khan at airports

DNA

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has sought security protocol for former prime minister Imran Khan citing threats to his life from Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). According to sources privy to the matter, the PTI Chairman secretariat has written a letter to the aviation authority and sought protocol for the former prime minister at Islamabad airport. "The letter highlighted the security threats faced by Imran Khan," they said adding that the PTI has also sought permission for the use of the China gate at the Islamabad airport. The Airport Security Force (ASF), according to sources, has also been asked to provide security to the ex-premier. PTI Chief Imran Khan on Saturday said that a conspiracy is being hatched to kill him and that he has recorded a video statement which will be released if he is murdered so that the nation knows the conspirators.

Forex reserves dipped by \$6b in two months: Asad Umar

- Says Pakistan just weeks away from Sri Lankan situation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Asad Umar has said that since no-confidence motion the foreign exchange reserves of the State Bank of Pakistan have dipped by more than \$6b. Asad Umar has cautioned that the situation of Pakistan is only weeks away from the Sri Lankan economic situation lamenting that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lacks courage to take any decision. The former minister was addressing a presser alongwith PTI leaders in Islamabad on Sunday. Lashing out at the clumsy handling of the economic condition by the new government, Umar raved that day by day the economic crisis was getting worse and people's sorrow was started turning into anger. Umar said the country had bumper out-

put of four major crops last year, the industry grew by 10.6percent and the exports increased by 26percent. "The sugarcane crop increased by a record 9.6percent, rice production hit nine million tons after an increase of 10.7percent from last year, the maize crop increased by 8.6percent and the potato crop increased by 34.8percent," Umar said.

"No one can gag the dissenting voices after intimidating them. The nation is awake and lava of anger is being boiled inside them. Let the people decide about the future of Pakistan," Umar stressed, adding that economic experts were warning that the condition of Pakistan was just weeks away from what we had seen in Sri Lanka. He said that former premier Imran Khan tried his best to save the people from falling into quagmire of inflation. He claimed

that the PTI government adopted farmer-friendly policies. "And it's because of PTI's good economic policies, a foreign conspiracy was hatched to bring the no-confidence movement against its government," he added. The ex-development minister said that soon after the new government took reins of power, loadshedding started to hit the country despite the fact that the production of electricity was 10 times higher this year as compared to previous year. He said due to sagacious policies of the PTI government, the country registered growth in several economic sectors. He said this year, our growth rate would remain 6%; sugarcane crop grew by 9.6% as compared to the previous year and there was a record increase in the maize crop this year, all due to PTI economic policies.

Russia forges new partnerships, Lavrov says

"The collective West has declared total hybrid war on us and it is hard to predict how long all this will last but it is clear the consequences will be felt by everyone, without exception"

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said on Saturday that Moscow was the target of "total hybrid war" by the West but would withstand sanctions by forging deeper partnerships with China, India and others. In a speech on the 80th day since Russia invaded Ukraine, Lavrov pointed to the barrage of sanctions imposed by the West in an effort to portray Russia as the target, not the perpetrator, of aggression. "The collective West has declared total hybrid war on us and it is hard to predict how long all this will last but it is clear the consequences will be felt by everyone, without exception," he said. "We did everything to avoid a direct clash - but now that the challenge has been thrown down, we of course accept it. We are no strangers to sanctions: they were almost always there in one form or another." The sanctions on Russia's top companies, banks and political elite have been imposed to punish it for a war that has killed tens

Britain says Russia has lost a third of its forces

LONDON: Russia has probably lost around a third of the ground forces it deployed to Ukraine and its offensive in the Donbas region "has lost momentum and fallen significantly behind schedule", British military intelligence said on Sunday. "Despite small-scale initial advances, Russia has failed to achieve substantial territorial gains over the past month whilst sustaining consistently high levels of attrition," the British defence ministry said on Twitter. "Russia has now likely suffered losses of one third of the ground combat force it committed in February." It said Russia was unlikely to dramatically accelerate its rate of advance over the next 30 days. Since Russia's invasion on Feb. 24, Ukraine's military has forced Russia's commanders to abandon an advance on the capital Kyiv, before making rapid gains in the northeast and driving them away from the second biggest city of Kharkiv. A Ukrainian counter-offensive has been under way near the Russian-held town of Izium, though Ukraine's military reported on Sunday that Russian forces were advancing elsewhere in the Donbas region, the main theatre of war over the past month. - Agencies

of thousands of people and uprooted millions, disrupted energy markets and exacerbated a global food crisis by driving up prices for grain, cooking oils and fertiliser. In his speech, Lavrov laid out the strategy that Moscow is pinning its hopes on as it tries to cushion the hit to its economy and build new markets elsewhere. He cited the

sanctions, which have included the seizure of nearly half of Russia's \$640 billion in foreign reserves, as evidence that no one is safe against expropriation and "state piracy", and of the need for countries to lessen economic reliance on the United States and its allies. "Not only Russia but many others too are reducing dependence on the U.S. dollar, western technology and markets," he said, without stating evidence. Efforts by the West to isolate Russia were doomed to fail, he said. Russia's relations with China were the best they had ever been and it was developing a privileged strategic partnership with India. Just back from a trip to the Middle East, he also cited the importance of ties with Egypt, Algeria and Gulf nations, as well as Asia, Africa and Latin America. In one example of a sanctions-induced pivot in exports, Russia sold twice as much crude oil to India in the two months after its Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine as it did in all of 2021, as Western nations cut purchases of Russian oil and Indian refiners seized the chance to buy it at a discount.