



Islamabad POST

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Briefs

FM to attend meeting on global food security

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will visit New York for the ministerial meeting on "Global Food Security Call to Action" being held at the United Nations on May 18. The foreign minister is undertaking the visit at the invitation of US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. The meeting will bring together a regionally diverse group of countries including those most affected by food insecurity and those in a position to take action to address it. The ministers will be invited to speak on humanitarian needs and longer-term development efforts required to save lives and build resilience for the future, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. - APP

Imran Khan's mobile phone stolen: Gill

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Ex-special assistant to the prime minister Shahbaz Gill said Monday that two of PTI Chairman Imran Khan's mobile phones were stolen amid the Faisalabad jalsa. The PTI leader, in a tweet, said that after Khan's threat of releasing a "recorded video" - in which the former prime minister claims that he has mentioned characters behind his ouster - the government had gone berserk.

Imran, establishment were not on one-page

MONITORING DESK
ISLAMABAD: Imran Khan and the establishment were not on the same page when it came to the foreign policy of Pakistan, reveals leader of the PML-Q. Talking to the American Media, Parvez Elahi, the chief of PML-Q which has sided with Khan's PTI after he was ousted from power, said that there were several issues which had created differences between the former premier and the establishment.

PM tells Keqiang

Pak ready to boost security of Chinese

The two premiers also discussed in detail bilateral matters, while agreeing that Pakistan and China would not allow anyone to harm the time-tested ties



NEWS DESK/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China Li Keqiang Monday shared the view that Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership must continue to serve the vital interests of the peoples of the two countries, as well as the broader interests of peace and stability amidst the evolving regional and global milieu. To this end, the two

leaders agreed to enhance the momentum of exchanges to take bilateral cooperation to even higher levels. The prime minister and premier Li Keqiang held a comprehensive telephonic conversation which was marked by traditional warmth and cordiality, which is the hallmark of Pakistan-China relationship, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The two premiers also discussed in detail bilateral matters, while agreeing that Pakistan and China would not allow anyone to harm the time-tested all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between the two countries. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif thanked China for its firm support to Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national development and reaffirmed his government's unwavering support to China on all issues of its core interest. He also affirmed

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Imran responsible for current situation

Mariyyum says at the end of PML-N tenure in 2018 GDP growth rate was at 6.1 per cent

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Mariyyum Aurangzeb said on Monday that the people of Pakistan were fully aware of the fact that former prime minister Imran Khan was responsible for the present economic situation and unemployment in the country. In a tweet, sharing the economic data issued by the government she said that truth could not be hidden by lying, threatening or abusing. The people knew the real culprits behind the present economic catastrophe. She said that former prime minister Imran Khan was responsible for unemployment and hunger in the country. As per comparative data issued by the government of Pakistan, in 2018 when the PML-N tenure ended, dollar-rupee parity stood at 116 but when the PTI regime was removed through vote of no-confidence one dollar was equal to Rs189. At the end of PML-N tenure in 2018 GDP growth rate was at 6.1 per cent whereas at the end of the PTI government in April this year the expected growth rate was 4 per cent. Inflation ratio in 2018 was only 3.4 per cent which climbed to 13 per cent in April 2022 when PTI rule ended. Similarly food inflation which was only 2.3 per cent in 2018, it rose to 15 per cent



by end of PTI tenure. Sugar price which was Rs53 per kilogram in 2018 reached the mark of Rs90 after nearly four years of PTI rule. One kilogram ghee was available at Rs151 per kg in 2018 but its price was Rs470 when the PTI government was sent home. Electricity tariff per unit was Rs11 in 2018, but in April this year it reached Rs25 and gas price per 4 mmbtu in 2018 was Rs600 and in April this year it reached Rs1400. Fiscal deficit stood at Rs2260 billion when the PML-N tenure ended in 2018 and it climbed to Rs5600 billion by the time the PTI regime was removed. GDP and tax ratio was 11.2 percent in 2018 whereas it fell to 9.2 percent by April 2022. Government of Pakistan obtained loans from 1947 to 2018 remained Rs24,953 billion but Rs42,745 billion loans were taken in only three and a half years.



ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi met with the UAE Ambassador Hamad Alzaabi after signing the condolence book. - DNA

G7 criticizes Indian ban on wheat exports

FOREIGN DESK

STUTTGART: Agriculture ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) industrialised nations on Saturday condemned India's decision to ban unapproved wheat exports after the country was hit by a punishing heatwave. "If everyone starts to impose export restrictions or to close markets, that would worsen the crisis," German agriculture minister Cem Ozdemir said at a press conference in Stuttgart. India on Saturday banned wheat exports without prior

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One dead, several injured in Karachi blast

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A blast ripped through Karachi's crowded Bolton Market on Monday evening, leaving one woman dead and nearly a dozen people, including a police officer, injured. In the initial investigation, police officials said while the nature of the blast is still being

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Condoles death of Sheikh Khalifa

Pak shares grief of royal family: Alvi

Ambassador of UAE, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, thanked the President for the condolence visit

SHUJAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi paid a visit to the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and offered heartfelt condolences to the royal family, the people and the Government of UAE on the death of former President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The President expressed his grief over the sad demise of the ex-President of UAE and said that the people of Pakistan were deeply saddened over the death of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan as he was a true and sincere friend of Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the death of the former President of UAE was a great loss for both the countries and he wanted to get the feelings of the Pakistani

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FM Bilal offers condolences

DNA

ABU DHABI: Foreign Minister offered condolences on the demise of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi today. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari offered condolences to the newly-elected President of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Al-Nahyan family, the leadership and

Continued on Page 06

Nation will never accept this government, says Imran Khan

The former prime minister said that an FIA officer Dr Rizwan passed away after cardiac arrest while another officer is fighting for life due to a heart attack

BUREAU REPORT

SWABI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan said that the nation will never accept the government of thieves and slaves and reiterated the demand for fresh elections in the country. Imran Khan, while addressing the PTI public gathering in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) Swabi city today, said that they wanted to let the nation elect their rulers for the country. "We will never accept these thieves and slaves at any cost and we only want elections." The PTI chairman addressed another public gathering in Swabi today in continuation of his movement against the present government. In his opening remarks, Imran Khan said that he wants to see Swabi people in Islamabad following his call for a long march to get real independence. He said that nobody gives respect



to the slaves. He said that 80,000 Pakistanis, mostly from tribal areas, lost their lives in the US-led war on terror after 9/11, whereas, 3.5

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Vladimir Putin warns Finland, Sweden over NATO - Page 08



Govt to file case against Buzdar with anti-corruption dept

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader Attaullah Tarar said Monday the government has decided to move the Anti-Corruption Establishment against former chief minister Punjab Usman Buzdar. In a press conference, the PML-N leader said that the ex-chief minister deprived the poor masses of their rights and "ruthlessly plundered the resources of the country". The deputy secretary-general of the PML-N claimed former prime minister Imran Khan played the role of a facilitator in Buzdar's "corruption", while the ex-chief minister's front men also remained involved in "plundering the country's resources". "Usman Buzdar will have to answer for his corruption," Tarar said. The PML-N leader said since Khan's ouster, the PTI chairman has been acting



like there is no one more "pious" than him. "Imran Khan is trying to give the impression that there is no one more honest than him." Tarar claimed that during the previous

government, Khan took "illegal benefits", adding that the former prime minister was also involved in helping Farah Khan — a close aide of Khan's wife Bushra Bibi — to become an "absconder". "Farah Gogi was involved in corrupt practices and took the help of Bushra Bibi," the PML-N leader maintained. He said there was no trail for Farah's income and claimed that the close aide of Bushra Bibi had taken millions in exchange for each posting of a civil servant in Punjab. "The corrupt schemes were planned and supervised from Bani Gala [...] Usman Buzdar, Farah Gogi, and others like them were taken on board just for corrupt practices," he said. Tarar said Buzdar's assets had ballooned after becoming the chief minister and added that the reason behind his appointment was to have a man in office who would "make money for himself and earn for Bani Gala as well".

FESCO launches special information campaign

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: On the special directives of Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Secretary, Ministry of Energy Power Division, Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has launched a special campaign to provide information regarding electricity load management, breakdown and interruption in power supply to consumers through social media. In this connection, Whatsapp groups consisting upon 300 consumers are being prepared to update them about electricity related information while a FESCO nominated official would be in charge of Whatsapp group, said Chief Executive Officer (CEO) FESCO, Engr. Bashir Ahmed. He said that facilitation officers and officials would be restricted to provide the information to consumers and immediately redressal of their complaints. Chief Engineer Commercial Rana Ayub has nominated focal person for this special campaign. He further said that officials of the all five operations circles have allocated task to compile the data of 300 to 500 consumers at sub divisional level. In the ur-

ban areas of FESCO region, FESCO facilitators are making Whatsapp groups of their 300 consumers along with concerned XEN and SDO while proclamations would be made through mosques for information of the people of rural areas and collection of mobile data. FESCO officials would display departmental cards during the data collection. FESCO facilitator would remain in contact with concerned grid station, Sub Divisional Officer and Executive Engineer while SDO and XEN would be fully responsible for whole facilitation process, he added. He said that FESCO officers are providing necessary training to the nominated staff. He said that basic aim of two-way communication is to keep up to date the consumers about power related activities and provide them a platform which would be helpful to build strong relationships with them. GM Operation Muhammad Saleem, DG Customer Service Itrat Hussain, Chief Engineer Commercial Rana Ayub, Chief Engineer Operation Ghulam Farooq, Chief Engineer T&G Shabbir Ahmed, DG (HR&A) Nasar Hayat Maken, Director Customer Services Ibrar Ahmed and other officers were also present during the meeting.



KARACHI: Activists of Palestine Foundation Pakistan (PLF) staged a rally for marking 74 years of Nakba (Israel's creation) at the Press Club. — APP

IWMI organizes int'l new research workshop

PESHAWAR: The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) Pakistan organizes an international workshop on Water, Energy, Food, Ecosystem nexus for Indus Basin. According to a press release issued here on Monday, the workshop on

the new research for developmental program "NEXUS Gains for the Indus Basin: Realizing Multiple Benefits Across Water, Energy, Food and Ecosystems (Forests, Biodiversity)" was held in collaboration of International Food Policy Re-

search Institute (IFPRI) and Khawaja Fareed University of Engineering and Information Technology (KFUEIT). Officials from different organizations including Fauji Fertilizer Company (FFC), progressive farmers, Irrigation Department, On Farm Water Management (OFWM) Department, and Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) participated in the workshop. In his welcome address, Vice Chancellor, KFUEIT, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Suleman Tahir said that it is the responsibility of universities to offer solutions to the problems regarding local agriculture and industry. — APP

Impact of corona virus on hospitality industry

Hospitality industry is one of the most significant areas of the services sector. The Pakistan tourism and hospitality has tremendous potential. Tourism contributed nearly 7.1% to the gross domestic products (GDP) of Pakistan in 2019. Its valued nearly at USD 20 Billion in 2020 and the market is expected to grow 1 trillion USD by 2025, and grow at a CAGR of 3% by 2026. The COVID-19 had badly affected the tourism industry globally. According to the United Nations International tourism is expected to sustain loss of USD 50 billion dollars due to 3% drop in tourism as a result of outbreak of COVID-19. Pakistan is evolving as a significant

investment destination for new ventures in hospitality industry in terms of new hotel developments. Hotels in Pakistan are witnessing substantial increase in growth, in terms of average rate and occupancy and this trend is expected to continue further in upcoming years. The Government of Pakistan has also relieved visa policy, which has played a pivotal role in alluring a large number of foreign tourists. As per one of the researches approximately 60,070 foreigners have visited Pakistan in past 6 years in terms of tourist attractions. The enthralling places located in the northern parts of Pakistan being the top most amongst them. Ensuring the current government's focus

in developing the infrastructure for the tourism industry in Pakistan and strategic policies devised to promote domestic and international tourism, the country expects to see a rise in the number of visitors by nearly 30% until 2030. However, amidst the COVID-19 pandemic attack in Pakistan, the hospitality industry has witnessed huge losses and three out of seven top notch hotels in Karachi have closed since March 2020 due to pandemic. The industry is bearing the brunt of the virus as citizens have been restricted from travelling. PHA reports that Pakistan's hotel industry lost 100 million alone in February 2020 due to drop of foreign guests. The booking rate declined from

95% on average to 40% by March 2020. Although the government is lately encouraging tourism by announcing lucrative packages, however amidst the COVID-19 outbreak in Pakistan efforts are seemingly to go in vain. The restriction for foreign travelers & international flights further acted as almost nail in the coffin thus derailing the government's plans. Fighting all the odds, the hospitality industry is still optimistic & are positive to see the good times again soon. They are motivated as will weather this storm too.

Fizza Zafar current student of MS-Management Science in SZ-ABIST Islamabad



ISLAMABAD: JUI-F Chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman calls on PM Shehbaz Sharif. — APP

CM KP Mahmood Khan inaugurates Clinical lab

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan on Monday formally Inaugurated newly established Clinical Skills Lab at Post Graduate Medical Institute (PGMI), Hayatabad Medical Complex Peshawar. This state of the Art Skills Lab has been completed at a cost of Rs. 370 Million which is the only public sector simulation center of its kind across the Country. The Lab has the latest and updated simulators and equipment for training of Doctors in all specialties including Medicine, Surgery, Gynae and Orthopedics etc due to which our Doctors will not have to go abroad for training as before, as state of the art training facilities are now available through this lab. A ceremony to this connection was held here at PGMI, Hayatabad Medical Complex with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan as a chief guest. Provincial Cabinet Members Taimur Saleem Jhagra, Kamran Bangash, Barister Muhammad Ali Saif, members of Provincial Assembly Asif Khan, Malik Wajid and Arbab Wasim also attended the ceremony. Addressing the ceremony, the chief minister felicitated and lauded the efforts of Provincial Health Minister and management of PGMI for establishing state of the art Skills Lab and said this Skills Lab would prove to be a mile stone towards providing international

standard healthcare facilities to the people of the Province. He added that PGMI was undoubtedly the best Institute imparting training in Medical Sector which now has become the first ever Public Sector Institute having the latest and state of the art Skills Lab in the country. Mahmood Khan said that the Provincial Government has introduced unprecedented reforms in health sector adding that it has been the priority of his Government since the day first to put health and education sectors on modern lines. He said that old health care facilities in the Province were being upgraded whereas on the other hand new institutions with innovative facilities were being also established which would certainly result in improved health care facilities. He said that revamping of all District Head Quarter Hospitals was in progress adding that basic Health Units and Rural Health Centers were also being converted into 24/7 Health facilities. Besides Government was also establishing four tertiary Hospitals in the different regions of the Province under Public Private Partnership which on completion would reduce the burden of patients on existing major Hospitals of the Province and provide standard Health Care facilities to people at their door steps. He made it clear that a number of reforms and Development initiatives were completed during the last one and half year which have resulted in significant change in Health Sector of

the Province. He said that Sehat Card Plus was a pro poor initiative of his Government under which free Health Care facilities had been extended to the cent percent Population of the Province. He lamented that imported Prime Minister even did not know that people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had already been provided with free treatment facilities. Mahmood Khan said that imported Government was not even able to decide Petrol Prices; what other decisions will it make. He said that Imran Khan was fighting for the real independence and sovereignty of the country adding that millions of people would take to the streets on the call of Imran Khan for the purpose. He said that general elections would take place soon in the country and Imran Khan will become the prime minister again with a two thirds majority. Touching upon the rights of the Province, Mahmood Khan said that he will continue to fight to get rights of the Province from imported federal government at all cost.

Earlier, Provincial Health Minister Taimur Saleem Jhagra also addressed the ceremony and highlighted the reforms and other initiatives taken in the Health Sector. Chief Executive officer of PGMI Dr. Muhammad Arif briefed the participants about the performance of institute. Medical Director Professor Dr. Shehzad Akbar and Hospital Director Dr. Shehzad Faisal of Hayatabad Medical Complex were also present on the occasion.

Critical economy needs collective approach

LAHORE: Critical economic state-of affairs demand a collective and instrumental approach from the political parties as the ongoing political scenario is pushing the economic affairs at no point of return. These views were expressed by President of LCCI Mian Nauman Kabir while speaking at a seminar on economic affairs, here Monday. LCCI President said, "We have to succeed in

formulating a comprehensive strategy on the problems facing our economy and their possible solutions." He said that Pakistan is currently facing severe economic challenges, adding, "We have to improve economic conditions as soon as possible." Mian Nauman Kabir said that one of the main reasons for the economic difficulties is the extreme lack of consist-

ency in economic policies in the country. That is why, in the first 9 months of the current financial year, Pakistan's net FDI was limited to only 1.3 billion USD. Mian Nauman Kabir said that in this scenario, it is very important for the country to have a unified Charter of Economy by the political parties in order to ensure continuity in economic policies. — APP

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Hashoo Group, Sky Nine sign agreement

STAF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Hashoo Group signed a management agreement contract with Sky Nine Developers for PC Legacy, Best Western Rawalpindi Central, and Ramada Plaza by Wyndham, Bahria Town, Islamabad at Marriott Hotel Islamabad. The MoU was signed by Mr. Murtaza Hashwani, Deputy Chairman and CEO of Hashoo Group and Mr. Mustafa Hussain Syed, CEO, Sky Nine. Also present at the ceremony were Mr. Syed Musheer Hussain, Chairman, Sky Nine, Mr. Waleed Malik, Managing Director Sky Nine, Mr. Arif Hussain, President Sky Nine, Mr. Haseeb A. Gardezi, COO, Hospitality and Education Division, Hashoo Group along with the senior management of Hashoo Group. Ramada Plaza, and Best Western will open on either side of PC Leg-



acy, Bahria Town Islamabad, where PC Legacy will be owned by Sky Nine Developers and managed by Hashoo Group. Along with this, Hashoo Group while providing white label services to both the international brands. With a total of 425 rooms and suites, offering both business and leisure travelers a host

of modern amenities and comforts in the heart of the twin cities. "We are pleased to welcome Ramada Plaza and Best Western on board, through our partnership with Sky Nine Developers," said Mr. Haseeb A. Gardezi, "Hashoo Group aims to offer a high level of expert domestic support ser-

vices to the two international hotel brands, Ramada Plaza and Best Western, with our consistent stand-out hospitality services from PC Legacy, that Hashoo Hotels are known for." On the occasion, Mr. Mustafa Hussain Syed said, "We are pleased to sign the white label management

agreement with Hashoo Group, to establish a culture of consistent and premium hospitality in Bahria Town, Islamabad, and we look forward to welcoming guests at PC Legacy, Ramada Plaza and Best Western." Housing a variety of specialty cuisine restaurants, the hotels will also feature the facilities of a Health Club and spa, meeting and conference rooms, banquet halls and children's recreational facilities. This is Hashoo Group's first strategic partnership for white label services for international hotel brand franchises. The Group plans to further expand its portfolio of branded hotels across the country, through more partnerships in the future. Leading the hospitality industry of Pakistan for nearly five decades, Hashoo Group owns and operates the five-star Pearl-Continental Hotels, Marriott Hotels, PC Legacy and Hotel One across the country.

National Days and Armed Forces Days

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



Hotels & Restaurants

- Serena Hotel.....111 133 133
- Marriott.....051- 2826121
- Monal.....0334-5421812



Airlines

- Turkish Airlines.....8494949



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- Motorway Police..9270601-20
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- DHQ.....5556311-4
- RGH.....9290301-7
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- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
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- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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- Potohar Town.....9209224
- Rawal Town.....5773343

Water Tank

- Islamabad.....0321-5744480

ICCI signs MoU with FWCCI to promote women empowerment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FWCCI) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to resolve the key issues of women entrepreneurs and promote their economic empowerment. Muhammad Shakeel Munir President ICCI and Ms. Nighat Shahid, President FWCCI signed the MoU during a ceremony held at ICCI. By signing the MoU, ICCI will support FWCCI in highlighting the key issues of women entrepreneurs for the attention of the government and cooperate in efforts for increasing the role of women in the economic development of the country. Both Chambers will strengthen mutual cooperation to help women entrepreneurs in business development and will raise the common issues of businesswomen at relevant forums for redress. Both trade bodies will arrange exchange of visits of their respective members to discuss matters of common interest. They will work together to develop recommendations for the government to accelerate business activities and exports. They will also make joint efforts for promoting a positive image of Pakistan and enhancing trade, investment, exports and tourism. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce



& Industry said that only 1 percent women in Pakistan were entrepreneurs, due to which the country was not realizing its full economic potential and urged that the government should make policies to encourage and promote women entrepreneurs for that would ensure robust economic growth of the country. He stressed that measures should be taken to overcome the barriers for women entrepreneurs and encourage

more females towards entrepreneurship for inclusive economic growth of the country. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with FWCCI for promoting the interests of businesswomen. Ms. Nighat Shahid, President, Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that growth of women entrepreneurs was very important for sustainable economic development of Pakistan. However, she said that

women were facing multiple issues including lack of easy access to finance for establishing businesses. She urged that the government should address the key issues of women entrepreneurs to create more room for them in the economic development of the country. She hoped that the collaboration between ICCI and FWCCI would help in enhancing the role of women in the business field for their bet-

ter economic empowerment. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Chairman Founder Group, Fatma Azim former Senior Vice President, Neelam Khalid, Nasira Ali and others also spoke at the occasion and called upon the government to make conducive policies for economic empowerment of women.

Chiniot dam to be completed by 2022

ISLAMABAD: The Chiniot dam located on Chenab river about 5 km from the Chiniot city would be completed by December 2022. According to detail, the gross storage of the chiniot dam has 0.90 MAF and Power Generation of Chiniot dam is 80 Mega Watt (274 GWh). The project of dam will be executed by Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA). The government would be provided Rs 50 million under public sector development programme whereas Rs 96.330 million to be funded by WAPDA from its own resources. Feasibility Study of Chiniot Dam Project was carried out by WAPDA and completed in 2019. PC-II Proforma for Detailed Engineering Design submitted to Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR) for consideration in forthcoming DDWP meeting. DDWP has approved the PC-II Proforma subject to certain conditions. - APP

Imran wanted to derail democracy: Senator

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Senator Afnan Ullah Khan on Sunday said former prime minister Imran Khan wanted to derail democratic system as he was continuously speaking lies with the people. Talking to a private news channel, he said Imran Khan had nothing to sale among the people regarding performance of his government that's why he was speaking lies and using indecent language against others. The senator said Imran Khan should present solid evidences about American conspiracy if he had but he was misleading the public during his speeches in political gatherings. He said the incumbent government under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif wanted to improve the national economy as soon as possible, adding the present government was a coalition government as it would be taken all decisions with consensus of its allied political parties. - APP

Pakistan Customs seize foreign currency \$38,500

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Pakistan Customs on Sunday Seized Foreign Currency Worth USD \$38,500 at Peshawar Airport. The Continuing with its ongoing incessant operations against currency smuggling, Pakistan Customs has seized Qatiriya's worth USD\$38,500 this afternoon at Peshawar Airport, said a press release issued here. A passenger named Imran Khan, Passport No. 1570-65304-1 resident of Dir Upper was departing for Qatar via Qatar Airlines, on May 15, 2022 (Sunday) from Bacha Khan International Airport (BKIA), Peshawar. After giving him an opportunity to declare the currency at the Currency Declaration Desk established in the Departure Hall, his baggage was searched upon suspicion. It led to the recovery of 1,46,000Qatiriya being illegally smuggled out of Pakistan. - APP

PM sets up task force on climate change

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday formed a task force on climate change in view of the country currently facing heatwave and melting of glaciers. The task force included relevant federal ministers, secretaries, provincial chief secretaries and relevant provincial secretaries, chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and senior officials of other agencies. - APP

Miseries of families continue unabated in IIOJK: report

ISLAMABAD: The miseries and victimization of the Kashmiri families at the hands of Indian troops and police personnel continue unabated in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to a report released by the Research Section of the Kashmir Media Service, Jammu and Kashmir, being the most militarized zone in the world, has witnessed killings, enforced disappearances, torture cases, rapes and other brutalities by the Indian forces over the three decades. More than 8,000 vanished only in the custody after they were arrested by the Indian troops, police and paramilitary forces during cordon and search operations and house raids since 1990. The report revealed that thousands of families of victims of enforced disappearances have been working tirelessly to trace their missing ones. Also the families of those who disappeared people suffer economically in most cases, the breadwinner of the family is targeted. The report said that thousands of Kashmiris, including over a dozen women leaders, AasiyaAndrabi, NaheedaNasreen, FehmeedaSofi and Insha Tariq Shah were facing illegal detention inside Kashmir jails and in infamous Tihar Jail in India. They are being victimized only for representing the Kashmiri people's righteous demand and aspirations. - APP

'Right to self-determination only salutation'

ISLAMABAD: Mishal Malik, wife of jailed Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik on Monday said that the solution to the Kashmir dispute lies only in securing the Kashmiris' right to self-determination in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations on Kashmir. "It is need of hour that OIC must have to play a pro-active role to develop a consensus to ensure the implementation of UN resolutions and Kashmiris must be given the right to self-determination", she said in an exclusive interview to PTV News. She said unity and sacrifices of innocent Kashmiris would lead their freedom struggle to its logical conclusion soon. Mishal said that the rights situation in IIOJK was worst in recent history where people have been deprived of their fundamental rights, including rights to life, food, health and freedom of expression. The world's criminal silence over Indian barbarism in IIOJK is highly condemnable and the United Nations and world powers must take practical steps to save the Kashmiris from Indian onslaught, she demanded. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Syed Aftab Haider Jaffary presenting his book to Dr. Farid A Khawaja former Director General NPSL, during book launch ceremony. - DNA

Criticism of Pakistan Army termed reprehensible

DNA

Special Advisor to Zhejiang Chamber of Commerce Syed Jawad Ali Shah on Monday said constant criticism of the Pakistan Army by the defeated elements is inexcusable. Anti-state elements will never succeed in their nefarious aims as people hold defence forces in high esteem, he said. In a statement issued here today, Syed Jawad Ali Shah said

that the masses are proud of the sacrifices and services of the army, intelligence agencies, FC and all law enforcement agencies and they do not believe in conspiracies against them. He said that the failed and rejected politicians want civil war in the country. The elements conspiring against the national institutions have been given a lot of freedom and now they should be dealt with severely. Jawad Ali Shah, who is also the Cen-

tral Vice Chairman of All Pakistan Sadat Association, said that if action is not taken against those who spew poison against the Pakistan Army to fulfil the agenda of the enemies, then Sadat Association may take an action and get cases of treason registered against them. He said that no concession should be made to any political, non-political or religious organization or any group attacking the reputation of national institutions, which are very important for the integri-

ty of Pakistan. The parties are warned not to drag an institution like the Army into politics for their own interests, as doing so would be tantamount to supporting the enemies of the country, he noted. He said that the social media campaign against the army could backfire on a failed political party as defence sources are collecting evidence on how smear campaigns against the army and its chief have been run.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Romanian Nicolae Goia signing the condolence book to condole death of Palestine journalist who was killed by the Israeli forces. - DNA

Briefs

Govt notifies transfer, posting of officers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Monday notified transfer and posting of high rank officers. According to a notification issued by Establishment Division, Ahmad Hanif Orakzai, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted as Member, Federal Land Commission, is transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division, with immediate effect and until further orders.

While Mohibullah Khan Mandokhail, a BS-19 officer of Police Service of Pakistan, presently serving in National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP), under Ministry of Communications, is transferred and his services are placed at the disposal of Interior Division for further posting in Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), with immediate effect and until further orders. - APP

Shehroze Kashif, Abdul Joshi excel in mountaineering world

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Shehroze Kashif and Abdul Joshi continued shining in the mountaineering world as on Sunday they made the nation proud once again by ascending peaks Lhotse and Everest, respectively.

"Shehroze has submitted the world's 4th highest peak Lhotse (8516m) at 6:05 am PST," Karrar Haidri, secretary Alpine Club of Pakistan said in a message. He congratulated the nation on Shehroze's feat, pointing out that the 20-year-old climber had already made history when on May 5 he summited Kanchenjunga (8586m) to inscribe his name in the record books.

"He is the youngest mountaineer in the world as well as the first Pakistani to summit Kanchenjunga. He is the youngest mountaineer in the world to summit three highest peaks of the world (Mount Everest 8849m, K2 8611m and Kanchenjunga. Now he has raised the green flag at Everest," he added.

Haidri in another message about climber Abdul Joshi's accomplishment said, he had summited Everest. According to Haidri Joshi, who belongs to Shimshal valley of Hunza in Gilgit-Baltistan was part of a 13-member Everest expedition team, led by Nepalese mountaineer Mingma Gyalje Sherpa (Mingma G) of Imagine Nepal. He has submitted the world's highest mount today.

Abdul Joshi is the first Pakistani to summit Annapurna, the tenth highest mountain in the world at 8,091m, in 2021. He also led a 12-member Pakistani team to the first-ever summit of Passu cones. - APP

CDNS collect Rs 980 billion fresh bonds by May 15

ISLAMABAD: The Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) on Monday realized the target of issuing Rs980 billion fresh bonds in the last 10 months of current fiscal year 2021-22 from July 1st to May 15th. The CDNS had set an annual gross receipt target of Rs 980 billion from July 1 to June 30 of the previous fiscal year 2020-21 to promote savings in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP here.

The senior official said the CDNS had set Rs 250 billion annual collection target from July 1 to June 30 for the year 2020-21 as compared to Rs 352 billion for the previous year (2019-20) for the same time span to enhance savings in the country. The CDNS had set Rs 352 billion annual collection target for the year 2019-20 as compared to Rs 350 billion for the previous year (2018-19), he said. Replying to a question, he said the CDNS has decided to start Islamic finance and will start implementing its procedural work from next month to provide the facility of Islamic finance in the institution.

In this regard, under Islamic Sharia Compliance, Prize Bonds and Savings Certificates will be issued for investment in accordance with Sharia Principles, he said. - APP

Under CPEC every province to give comparative advantage

"We are also working to provide clean drinking water to people of Gwadar and also a power generation station to generate electricity for the area"

DNA

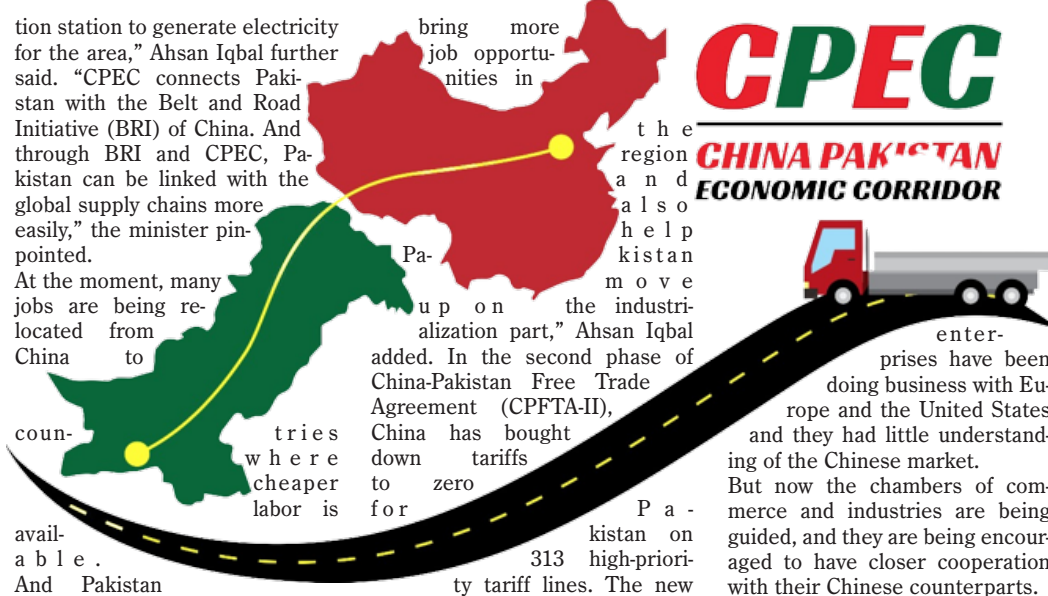
ISLAMABAD, May 16 () : "CPEC has a portfolio of projects in different provinces in Pakistan, depending upon their requirements and their areas of competency. And based on different comparative advantages, every province will develop its own cluster of industries," said Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning and Development, in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN). As the minister put it, such a portfolio will bring more investment and create more employment opportunities for the youth from that province. Take Balochistan as an example. CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) is focusing on the development of Gwadar, where it also provides - besides developing the port infrastructure - facilities for medical care, education, technical education and livelihood of the locals.

"We are also working to provide clean drinking water to people of Gwadar and also a power genera-

tion station to generate electricity for the area," Ahsan Iqbal further said. "CPEC connects Pakistan with the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of China. And through BRI and CPEC, Pakistan can be linked with the global supply chains more easily," the minister pointed.

At the moment, many jobs are being relocated from China to Pakistan. And Pakistan with the CPEC connectivity has a very good opportunity to absorb most of this relocation.

"We hope that when the special economic zones in each province are ready, they will attract considerable investment in the relocation of Chinese industry that will



bring more job opportunities in the region and also help Pakistan move up on the industrialization part," Ahsan Iqbal added. In the second phase of China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (CPFTA-II), China has bought down tariffs for Pakistan on 313 high-priority tariff lines. The new FTA, the minister noted, offered more opportunities for promoting trade between both countries.

However, the challenge faced by Pakistani businessmen and enterprises is to enter China with more information and knowledge about its market. Traditionally Pakistani

enterprises have been doing business with Europe and the United States and they had little understanding of the Chinese market. But now the chambers of commerce and industries are being guided, and they are being encouraged to have closer cooperation with their Chinese counterparts.

"As I see it in coming years, there will be greater cooperation between Pakistani and Chinese enterprises," said the minister. And this offers great promise in light of the long term plan of CPEC that envisages cooperation in all dimensions of economy, agricul-

ture, industry, technology, service, education, health and so on. "We hope that this cooperation will fully blossom in all areas and there will be greater connectivity between China and Pakistan," Ahsan Iqbal told CEN.

However, "we must be mindful that there are some forces which are enemy of CPEC, which do not want CPEC to move forward," the minister said. While strongly condemning the terrorist attack on a shuttle van of Confucius Institute at the University of Karachi last month, he said that the government has devised a strategy for greater coordination amongst all security agencies and organizations to ensure foolproof security to the Chinese working on CPEC projects. The minister noted, the best way to defeat such forces is not to let such incident impact the speed of CPEC and to further increase the implementation of CPEC so that they get the message that through such cowardly acts, they will not be able to stop the progress of CPEC.

Estate Office vacates 13 houses

ISLAMABAD: Estate Office, Ministry of Housing Works (MoHW) has vacated as many as 13 government residences from the employees of the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and one other government department in one and half year. "The rest of the government accommodations will revert back to the pools of Estate Office," an official in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP.

He said the mechanism was decided by the Ministry of Housing and Works and WAPDA authorities amicably in a meeting during last year. However, the allottees who had been allotted accommodation prior to the promulgation of Accommodation Allocation Rules-2002 would be allowed to retain the government accommodation till their date of superannuation, he added. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco Mohammad Karmoune signing the condolence book to condole death of Palestine journalist who was killed by the Israeli forces. - DNA

IWMB successfully rehabilitates four black bear cubs

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) has successfully rescued and rehabilitated four cubs of excessively poached Black Bears from various locations where the threatened baby bears were looked after by expert and trained caretakers of the Board.

The journey of rescue and rehabilitation of black bears started back in 2021 when two animal lovers from Rawalpindi recovered a three-month old cub and handed over to the Board, told APP Chairperson IWMB Rina Saeed Khan while sharing the animal rehabilitation endeavours done by the Board.

Khan said the poor cubs showed the unheard story of illegal hunting and poaching of Black Bears found in the forest mountains of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). She said two staffers of the

IWMB Gibran and Raja Anees were sent to Jordan's Al-Mawa Bear Sanctuary for training on handling bears during the relocation of two Himalayan Bears along with the elephant Kavaan sent to Cambodia. She added that Daboo was recovered in a bag with his ears ripped by the poacher and might have perished in that condition if the wildlife lovers did not rescue him and brought to the IWMB rehabilitation centre. The Board after the closure of the Marghar Zoo had decided to establish a animal rescue and rehabilitation centre that was still on the cards awaiting the government's funding, she said.

Daboo, she said was not able to be released into the wild as it had developed close association with the humans due to extreme care and look after by the Board staff.

Later, she said one baby bear Baloo was rescued from a Bear Dancer in Gu-

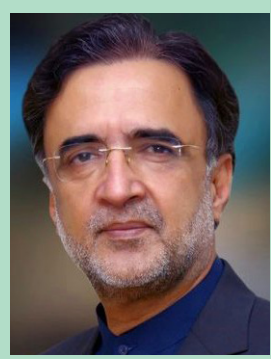
Colours of state media's banners, changed to mourn UAE President

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday said colours of all the websites' logos and electronic banners of the state media were changed to mourn the demise of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan for the next three days.

The decision to this effect was taken on the special directives of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Marriyum Aurangzeb said in a news statement. She said, "on the demise of UAE President Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, all the electronic banners and websites' logos of the Pakistan Television and Radio Pakistan were changed to the colour of mourning." Logo signs of the Radio, Associated Press of Pakistan and Press Information Department's official handles would also display in the colour of mourning for the next three days, she added. - APP

Govt to take difficult decisions for larger interest of country

SAPM said despite of the national security council clarification Imran was continuously speaking lies regarding international conspiracy against his govt



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistance to the Prime Minister on Sunday said the government shall have to take tough decisions in the larger interest of the country. Talking to a private news channel, he said the government would have to face all circumstances as it was the challenge for any government. He said elections should be held in proper time as the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was not ready to hold the general elections before six to seven months, adding electoral reforms was the top most agenda of the incumbent government. Replying to a question, he said ex prime minister Imran Khan was carried out fake narrative of American conspiracy but he was not ready to show any solid evidences in that regard and he would not succeed to make foolishes the people for long time. The SAPM said despite of the national security council clarification Imran Khan was continuously speaking lies regarding international conspiracy against his government. He said Imran Khan was using lies as fuel for his politics and he was habitual for taking U-Turns. He said the government was taking hard decision for not increasing petroleum prices. - APP

SBP offering easy instalment loans to citizens

Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas met Amjad Ali Imran Chief Manager State Bank of Pakistan Balochistan in Quetta yesterday

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas called on Amjad Ali Imran Chief Manager State Bank of Pakistan Balochistan Region Amjad Ali Imran, Chief Manager, said that the State Bank of Pakistan would also set up a stall at the exhibition where commercial Representatives of the Bank will also be present with him at the Expo, SBP is taking all possible steps to provide easy instalment loans to citizens through commercial banks: SBP is taking all possible steps to offer easy instalment loans to citizens through commercial banks: Amjad Ali Imran Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas met Amjad Ali Imran Chief Manager State Bank of Pakistan Balochistan in Quetta yesterday.



During the meeting, Amjad Ali Imran said that SBP was working hard for the housing sector in Balochistan. SBP will fully participate and co-operate in the Investment in Balochistan Forum and at the Quetta Property Expo from May 27 to 29. Until the SBP fully participates and cooperates in the Quetta Property Expo.

SBP Chief Manager Amjad Ali Imran said that SBP will also set up a stall at Quetta Property Expo where representatives of Commercial Bank will also be present at the expo where citizens will be guided and informed about easy loan terms so that SBP's efforts will be utilized to improve the living standards of the people. Chairman Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Mohammad Khurshid Barlas assured that property expo events would be continued in Quetta like in other cities. So that the people here can also benefit from it and SBP stands by you to improve the living standards of the people.

Pakistan earns \$1,947 million from IT services' export

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$1,947.902 million by providing different Information Technology (IT) services in various countries during the first three quarters of fiscal year 2021-22. This shows growth of 29.27 percent as compared to US \$1,506.860 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year 2020-21, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During July-March (2021-22), the export of computer services grew by 31.38 percent as it surged from US \$1,191.160 million last fiscal year to US \$1,564.922 million this year. Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed an increase of 46.84 percent, from US \$393.791 million to US \$578.241 million while the exports of hardware consultancy services also rose by 304.18 percent from, US \$0.407 million to US \$1.645 million.

The export and import of computer software related services also rose by 41.59 percent, from US \$294.965 million to US \$417.631 million whereas the exports of repair and maintenance services surge to \$1.130 million from \$0.399 million. In addition, the exports of other computer services increased by 12.89 percent going up from US\$ 501.598 million to US \$566.275 million. Meanwhile, the export of information technology services during the period under review increased by 37.54 percent by going up from US \$3.010 million to US \$4.140 million. - APP

Railways lease over 4,578 acres land to earn profit

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has leased out over 4,578 acres of its land during the last three and half years to transform the department into profitable entity by generating more revenue. "The leased-out land was located in seven divisions including Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi, Multan and Sukkar," official in the Ministry of Railways told APP.

He also divulged details of a plan, aimed at exploiting 25 mega sites of Pakistan Railways commercially under public-private partnership.

An expression of interest to hire the consultant for the purpose was given in the newspapers last year, he said. Likewise, a second phased was also on the cards under which some 111 new commercial sites were identified for commercial use through public private partnership.

To a question, he said Pakistan Railways had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups and even business organizations using it for residential, commercial and agriculture purposes for decades. "The encroachment operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the provincial governments," he added. - APP

Salik visits BOI after assuming charge as Federal Minister

ISLAMABAD: Chaudhry Salik Hussain visited the Board of Investment (BOI) on Monday after assuming charge as the Federal Minister for Board of Investment. Minister was given a warm welcome by Secretary BOI, Fareena Mazhar and other senior officers of the Board of Investment, said a press release issued here.

He was given a detailed briefing regarding the working of BOI and was also sensitized about the initiatives taken by BOI to facilitate and encourage investment in Pakistan.

Hussain was appreciative of the efforts being put in by BOI to help Pakistan prosper economically and assured of maximum support from his side to resolve investors' issues and boost investor confidence in Pakistan. - APP

Water shortage

People in different parts of Balochistan, Sindh and Punjab are facing severe problems due to water shortage. On the one hand, water scarcity is increasing the problems of the people and on the other hand, mistrust is also being created among the provinces. Sindh Irrigation Minister has accused Punjab of stealing water and said that not enough water is reaching Sindh. He claimed that 67,000 cusecs of water was released from Taunsa, which means that the water of Sindh disappeared between Guddu and Taunsa. The Indus River System Authority (IRSA) misrepresented or did not release water. The water crisis intensified in Sindh and Balochistan, the Indus River dried up and standing crops were damaged due to lack of water in the canals.

In view of the ongoing water crisis in different parts of the country, experts say that there is a danger of food shortage due to water shortage. On the one hand, experts are informing about the problems arising out of water scarcity in the country on the other hand, in a report of the United Nations, Pakistan has been included in the list of 23 countries in the world which have been facing drought for the last two years. According to a report titled 'Global Land Outlook', besides Pakistan, 22 other countries facing drought include Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and the United States. The report predicts the situation for the year 2050, what problems different regions and countries may face due to water scarcity till then and what steps need to be taken to avoid them.

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Many proposals to build new dams have been under consideration for a long time to overcome the problem of water scarcity in Pakistan and work is underway on many projects but so far no major project has been completed which will overcome these problems. An important point in this regard is that every government makes some announcements to protect its political interests and to be popular among the people which have nothing to do with the ground realities, the result is that the people are happy with the statements. But problems remain. Important project like Kala Bagh Dam has become a political issue in our country, so no government can take any concrete steps for its construction. The co-ordination that is needed between the provinces in this regard has been sacrificed to political interests. Due to non-availability of required number of dams, water shortage problems are also arising in Pakistan and people are also facing the torment of electricity load shedding. Even now the people are helpless due to load shedding in different parts of the country. According to reports, the duration of load shedding in Karachi has reached 6 to 14 hours while the duration of load shedding has also increased due to increasing demand for electricity in Punjab including Lahore. Whether it is power outages or water shortages, the only solution is for the government to take this issue very seriously and formulate a national policy to address it on an urgent basis. Involve experts from all administrative units of country. At the same time, it should be decided that no next government will obstruct the implementation of this policy.

Honor, Freedom and Faith

Askari Raza Malik

The Pakistani ego seems to have suddenly come to life catapulting the issue of national honor as an unending top trend on the social media and a compelling headliner on national news. Pakistani leaders' reluctance to compromise on national integrity is not new. Liaquat Ali Khan was martyred before he could take the nation into confidence on the American bullying. Z A Bhutto made a feeble attempt to expose the conspiracy against him by waving the threat to a spontaneous gathering at night in Raja Bazar Rawalpindi. His judicial murder closed the chapter forever

A young PPP enthusiast asked me, "Can we fight America?" I smiled. General Pervez Musharraf on receiving the American threat of being bombed into stone age, had war-gamed the same issue, "Could we fight America?" The answer was "NO". This must have been the silliest war-game of his long military career. Technically speaking no one nation can fight America with a defense budget many times that of entire Pakistan. There is an old American saying, "If you can't lick them, join them." Musharraf joined them. And in doing that he unnecessarily dived headlong into slavery surrendering everything, national hon-

or, freedom and self-respect. When the Americans bombed a madrasa in KP killing over 80 innocent children as 'would be terrorists', he owned the sin of his masters to save them international rebuke. In the same vein we are about to ban criticizing America as sacrilegious, unholy and sinful. Around the 500 BC Athens was faced with an imminent threat of invasion from Persia (Iran), a superpower. The affluent tradesmen advocated that the war would be cost prohibitive. Peace would enable Athens to remain one of the leading Greece states in wealth and prosperity. For the honorable, freedom was paramount, costs notwithstanding. Athens opted for referendum. The freedom lovers won. In a long-drawn conflict, Athens gradually joined by other city states was able to inflict a decisive and comprehensive defeat on the Persians. The Muslim history is replete with examples when the faithful had defeated the enemy despite huge disadvantage in comparative strength ratio. From Badr, against the Makkans to the battle of Qadisiya, against the Persians, a superpower, the Muslims continued to win against heavy odds. The apparent power quotients have no meanings once the battle is joined. The latest is Afghanistan, making one after the other two superpowers regret and leave in disgrace. The war is no option for Pakistan. We need not fight America as we do not have to surrender before it. Joining American War on Terror might have been a mistake of strategic judgment. Behaving a slave was purely of General Musharraf's

own choosing. Islam makes fighting incumbent upon Muslims only when they are attacked. That is Jihad like the Afghan Jihad to preserve their freedom. In that case there is no other course open for the faithful.

Seeking refuge in the linguistic circumlocution is a senseless exercise. Intervention or conspiracy? It is only a conclusive conspiracy that makes intervention possible. Conspiracy in itself alone at best is an irritant like the Indian incubator hatching out anti-Pakistan conspiracies on daily basis. The lexical rigmarole apart, no self-respecting nation could accept outside interference in its domestic affairs. It challenges a nation's sense of self-respect and honor, according to Iqbal, 'Mata e Gharoor', or the assets of ego.

The Pakistani ego seems to have suddenly come to life catapulting the issue of national honor as an unending top trend on the social media and a compelling headliner on national news. Pakistani leaders' reluctance to compromise on national integrity is not new. Liaquat Ali Khan was martyred before he could take the nation into confidence on the American bullying. Z A Bhutto made a feeble attempt to expose the conspiracy against him by waving the threat to a spontaneous gathering at night in Raja Bazar Rawalpindi. His judicial murder closed the chapter forever. The world has changed. In this global village it is difficult to throttle dissent, internal or external. The social media has assumed gigantic proportions. The print and electronic media render emotions extremely contagious. Pakistanis from all over the world have fallen for the narrative on national ego. Pakistani nationalism reigns supreme, is universal, loud and irresistible making all other affiliations obsolete.

Pakistan must assert its independence and freedom in formulating its domestic and foreign policies. The cost is immaterial. If physically attacked and no one dare do that, Pakistan must fight back with all its might like the Afghan brethren. The doctrine, "There is no God but God" needs emphatic revival.

The American foreign policy analyst made no bones about it. America did not take kindly to our growing relations with China, our cozying up to Russia in search of cheaper oil, gas and wheat and our steadfast (stubborn) stance on Afghanistan. She welcomed the new government in Pakistan, cock sure that it would redress all American concerns like the good guys of the past. America orders us to remain away from certain countries. Conversely it could order us to chose our friends as she liked. For example, India, America's strategic partner in the region. For this purpose, we would have to contest Kashmir with kid gloves as before. The question of our nukes would be reopened with those who had previously also proved amenable to the nuclear program rollback. America would guarantee our security against nuclear threat like the promise given to Ukraine. India thus could bully Pakistan at will with her overwhelming superiority in conventional means of war. All smiles for the American strategists.

Imran Khan's assertions on freedom, national honor and defiance of slavery have evoked historic response from the Pakistanis at home and abroad. Maintaining the agitational momentum itself would be a Herculean task. Even if it succeeded and early elections were called, which is highly unlikely, Imran Khan would be faced with extremely heavy odds on the domestic and international fronts. He could as well be killed. We have seen a "teaser" in the murder attempt on Shahbaz Gill, the PTI activist.

The selfish have deserted Imran. "The night-runners" have made notion of justice stand on its head, ridiculed and demeaned. The law-and-order is to be maintained by "The Model Town" experts. An ominous gloom surrounds Pakistan. Still, against all the so-called superpowers and powers that be, God is Pakistan's only hope and indeed, He is the best of helpers.

(Major General @ Askari Raza Malik, Author of the book, 'Pakistan in Search of a Messiah')

Will great power competition revive the Non-Aligned Movement?

Ramzy Ezzeldin Ramzy



The historic leadership of NAM was provided by Egypt, India and Yugoslavia. The importance of Yugoslavia should not be underestimated. As a European country, it underscored the universality of the movement, but more importantly it proved that regardless of the economic system of a country, it could pursue an independent course in its foreign policy

The notion of "Great Power Competition" was introduced by the Trump administration in its 2017 National Security Strategy NNS and subsequently confirmed by its 2018 National Defense Strategy NDS. China was considered the main threat to US interests. Influenced by the crisis in Ukraine, the new NNS to be released shortly by the Biden administration is expected to retain the same notion, describing Russia as the acute threat and China as the pacing challenge, implying that the latter remains the more serious threat to US interests. Now with mounting realization that the war in Ukraine will not wind down quickly and as a consequence the Great Power Competition will indeed morph into a new Cold War, many developing countries appear to find their interests are better served by maintaining an equidistance from both the

context of the rivalry between the West and Russia. To discuss the feasibility of a revived NAM, we need to consider a number for matters: the rationale behind the rise to the movement, the nature of the international system today in comparison to the period in which it was created and, its leadership. But first we need to make the distinction between neutrality and non-aligned. The former implies remaining equidistant without being proactive. The latter implies positive or proactive engagement as manifested in the concept of "positive neutrality" developed by Nasser, Nehru, Sukarno and Tito at the inception of NAM and before that at the 1955 Bandung Afro-Asian conference. It appears those who detect a revived NAM, are speaking of neutrality rather than positive and proactive neutrality. Although NAM continues to hold regular conferences and issues

statements on various political and security related matters at the UN, it is a mere shadow of its past. Nowhere is this better manifested than in the United Nations Security Council, where the NAM caucus, once a formidable player, has played a progressively marginal role for the past three decades. The heyday of NAM was between its first summit held in Belgrade in 1961 and its ninth summit also held in Belgrade in 1989 which coincided with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. Some however will argue that the NAM started to unravel even earlier at the Havana Summit in 1979 when the Cuban presidency pushed the movement to adopt more pro-Soviet positions. The 1960's was the climax of the period of decolonization in Africa and Asia. Countries around the world wanted to chart their independent course from their former colonial masters in the West without entering into a dependency relationship with the Soviet Union. They managed with a certain degree of success, using the competition between the super powers to maximize their national interests. While countries may have favored purchasing arms from one camp or the other, they avoided any military or security arrangements that restricted their ability to maneuver. In contrast today not an insignificant number members of NAM have military and security arrangements, including military bases.

During the period 1958-1971 China considered both the US and the Soviet Union as strategic rivals. Beijing however, since President Nixon 1972 historic visit to China, has been successful in balancing its economic interests with the West with its political and strategic interests with Russia. Today however given that the United States considers China as its primary threat, the emerging new Cold War will be between the West on one side and China and Russia on the other. Also during the Cold War, there were two competing economic systems: the capitalist model of the west and the socialist one dominated by Russia. While there were linkages between both systems, they were largely self-contained. A developing country could therefore pursue its independent course deriving benefits from both. In short the level of dependency between the developing countries and either of the two super powers was significantly lower than it is now. With globalization, the West has come to dominate the strategic heights of the international economic system. Suffice it to mention that 97 percent of international reserves are held in US dollars, the Euro, the yen and the sterling pound. Until China is able to change that over the coming years that happens, NAM members will remain - at least in the mid-term - susceptible to the priorities and agenda of the West. Second is the issue of leadership. Any international political movement requires a core of actors that provide a vision, diplomatic acumen and political direction. The historic leadership of NAM was provided by Egypt, India

and Yugoslavia. The importance of Yugoslavia should not be underestimated. As a European country, it underscored the universality of the movement, but more importantly it proved that regardless of the economic system of a country, it could pursue an independent course in its foreign policy. This holds true for a number of NAM members that pursued a largely capitalist mode of development such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Kenya, Chile and Argentina (before it left the Movement in 1991). In other words, there was an over-arching common interest that overshadowed the diverse economic and political orientations amongst the members of the movement. Yugoslavia is no more. The only European member, Belarus is a close ally of Moscow. In fact, that it is a member since 1998 undermines the credibility of NAM as an independent actor. India is emerging as a world power in its own right. Its interests are no longer fully aligned with that of the majority of current NAM members. While its main strategic rival remains China, it can no longer depend on Russia as a counterweight as it did in the sixties and seventies. Over the past decades it has established closer military and political ties to the US such as the 2007 Quadrilateral Security Dialogue involving the US, Australia and Japan. While most members of NAM would like to avoid taking sides in the great power competition and would rather chart a balanced course that would serve their interests, they might find this extremely difficult given the economic realities of the global economic system in which the West continues to dominate. Neither China, nor for that matter Russia, are in a position to provide an alternative economic relationship to the one that the West offers the developing countries, at least in the medium term.

As much as many would like to see NAM revived as an effective platform that serves the interest of developing nations in the era of great-power competition, it appears it is more of wishful thinking than a practical and feasible proposition. This does not mean that a revival of NAM is impossible. Nor should we be discouraged from making an effort to regain its effectiveness. However, for such a venture to be successful, a core group of influential countries need to provide a new vision for the movement that captures the new realities that are shaping the international order and at the same time cater to the interests of its members. The challenge is to articulate a revised policy of positive neutrality to navigate the complex matrix of a declining West and an ascendant China over an extended period of time. This is no easy feat.

Writer is former Egyptian ambassador and Senior UN official.
 Source: Asharq Al-Awsat

Briefs

Pak ready...

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his government's firm resolve to fast-track both the ongoing as well as the new projects under the transformational China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which had immensely contributed to the socio-economic development of Pakistan and also realize its high-quality development. The prime minister underscored the need for both sides to work together and enhance cooperation between the concerned agencies of the two countries to fully operationalize the Special Economic Zones (SEZs) at an early date. While recalling Pakistan-China sister-city partnerships, he expressed his desire to learn from the experience of those Chinese officials who had remained instrumental in setting up SEZs in their provinces. The prime minister also expressed his commitment to working with renewed zeal and enthusiasm, in concert with China, especially on projects of strategic significance for both the countries, such as ML-1 project. The prime minister offered his condolences to the government and people of China and expressed sympathies with the families of victims of the heinous terrorist attack that took place at the Karachi University on 26 April 2022, in which three Chinese scholars lost their lives. While strongly condemning the terrorist attack, he reaffirmed Pakistan's firm resolve to hold through investigation, to apprehend the perpetrators of this criminal act and to bring them to justice in accordance with our laws. The prime minister reiterated that Pakistan attached the highest importance to the safety, security and protection of all Chinese nationals working in Pakistan on economic projects and institutions. He assured premier Li that his government was determined to take all necessary measures for their enhanced security and safety in Pakistan. While emphasizing people-to-people contacts, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also conveyed sentiments of the families of the Pakistani students who were desirous of returning to China for resumption of their studies.

Pak shares...

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nation registered. He stated that Pakistan shared the grief of the royal family and the people of the UAE. While paying rich tribute to the services rendered by the Late Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan for Pakistan, the President said that Pakistan-UAE ties under his leadership were further strengthened. He also reiterated the resolve to further improve and cement the friendship between the two countries. The ambassador of UAE, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem AlZaabi, thanked the President for the condolence visit and said that both Pakistan and UAE enjoyed strong relations. He also appreciated the contributions of the Pakistani community in the economic development of the UAE. Meanwhile Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited the UAE, to offer condolences to the Al-Nahyan family, the leadership and people of the UAE, on the passing away of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. In the demise of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa, the UAE has lost a visionary and statesman, who profoundly transformed the country.

FM Bilal...

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people of the UAE, on the demise of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, in Abu Dhabi today. The Foreign Minister also offered condolences to other members of the Royal family and prayed for the strength and fortitude of the leadership and brotherly people of the UAE to bear the irreparable loss. Lauding invaluable contributions of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa in strengthening bilateral ties between Pakistan and the UAE, the Foreign Minister grieved that Pakistan lost a sincere friend with his demise. Paying respects to the life and legacy of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa, the Foreign Minister fondly recalled his services to the nation and country, which will forever remain etched in history.

Abdul Joshi becomes 8th Pakistani to scale Mt Everest

Known as 'pathfinder' among mountaineers due to his extraordinary skills, Abdul Joshi was part of the team led by Mingma G. The expedition began on April 22 and they reached camp 4 on May 15

DNA

NEPAL: Hunzaiite Abdul Joshi, on Monday, successfully scaled the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest (8848m) and raised Pakistan's flag on top of the world. The 38-year-old Joshi started his final summit from Camp 4 last night at around 9pm PKT and reached the top on Sunday near 5am PKT. The summit was confirmed on Joshi's Facebook page. 'Alhamdulillah! Another triumph for Pakistan! Abdul Joshi has summited Mount Everest - the Highest Mountain in the World. May Allah be praised for all His glory,' the post read. Known as "pathfinder" among mountaineers due to his extraordinary skills, Abdul Joshi was part of the team led by Mingma G. The expedition began on April 22 and they reached camp 4 on May 15. He is 8th Pakistani to successfully scale Mt Everest. Nazir Sabir, Abdul Jabbar Bhatti, Hassan Sadpara, Mirza Ali Baig, Samina Baig, Shehroze Kashif and Sirbaz Ali Khan have also summited the highest peak of the world. In April last year, Abdul Joshi, along with Sirbaz Khan, had summited 8,091m Annapurna peak. His



first peak was Manglik Sar at 6,050m. He caught everyone's attention when he led a team for the first ever successful summit of Passu Cones in Gilgit. Mountaineers say that Abdul Joshi is one of the most skilled climbers in the country but he mainly focuses on unclimbed peaks and finding paths to summit. Abdul Joshi is likely to return to the basecamp on May 18th.

Novak Djokovic claims sixth Italian Open title

SPORTS DESK

ROME: Novak Djokovic won his sixth Italian Open title on Sunday after a straight-sets victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas, 6-0, 7-6 (7/5) in Rome, while Iga Swiatek won her fifth straight tournament by dispatching Ons Jabeur. World number one Djokovic saw off underwhelming Monte Carlo Masters champion Tsitsipas to claim the last major tournament before Roland Garros gets underway later this month. The 34-year-old won his first tournament of the season and confirmed his return to form after an opening few months of the season dominated by Covid-19 vaccination controversy. "I've been building my form for the last couple of weeks and like the previous years I knew that my best shape on the clay is usually coming around Rome time," Djokovic said on the court. "So it couldn't be a better time coming into Roland Garros with a title." Sunday's clash was a rematch of the pair's final at last year's French Open final but had little of the drama of that five-set thriller won by the Serb in Paris. Djokovic made surprisingly short work of Greece's Tsitsipas, who had also reached the semi-finals of last week's tournament in Madrid and still leads the men's tour for wins this season. Ranked fifth in the world, Tsitsipas was taken apart in the first set and looked oddly reluctant to take on Djokovic, but put up more of a fight in the second right until he threw away the set after serving for the match, succumbing in the tie-break without much resistance. An emotional Djokovic then spoke to the crowd in Italian, telling them that they were the reason he had such a good record there and revealing his



son Stefan was playing in his first ever tennis tournament. He later beamed with pride as he revealed Djokovic junior had claimed the honours at a small club competition back home in Serbia. "My son actually won the tournament. It's a sunshine double today," Djokovic told reporters. Iga Swiatek said she was going to treat Roland Garros as "any other tournament" after beating Jabeur 6-2, 6-2 to retain the women's title. World number one Swiatek dropped to her knees in tears of joy after winning her 28th match in a row, and will be red-hot favourite in Paris. "I'm going to treat it as any other tournament. I think it's going to be fine and I'm going to be able to keep it that way," said Swiatek. "I already know that I did some great stuff this season, so I feel like I can just play freely and not think I have to win." The 20-year-old Pole has dropped just one set in her last 20 matches and calmly dealt with Jabeur in a largely one-sided final in Rome.

Tunisia's Jabeur had made history last week after becoming the first Arab or African woman to win a WTA 1000 title but could not extend a career-best 11-match winning streak against her relentless opponent. Jabeur had come into her first Rome final on a roaring Foro Italico centre court on the back of two thrilling comeback wins over Daria Kasatkina and Maria Sakkari. And another unlikely comeback bid looked to be on when, a set down, she had three break points in game seven of the second set to take it to 4-3, only to lose the game after wasting another break chance at deuce. "When she doubled faulted at deuce I was like 'why didn't she do that a point or two points before?'," said Jabeur. "I did everything I can, I hit every corner of the court." Jabeur has moved up one place in the world ranking to sixth after reaching her second straight final and remains a force for the French Open.

Medvedev ready to play Wimbledon

GENEVA: World number two Daniil Medvedev insisted Sunday he was ready to play at Wimbledon if the All England Club reverses its ban on Russian players but accepted it was a "tricky situation". Medvedev, who is returning to the tour at this week's Geneva Open following a hernia operation, said the Roland Garros warm-up tournament was his first chance to talk with other players about the ban, which was announced on April 20. Wimbledon has been heavily criticised by both the ATP and WTA, as well as players like Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, for barring Russian and Belarusian competitors over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. "There has been a lot of talk around it. I just tried to follow what's happening because I don't have any decisions to make. It's right now about Wimbledon itself, the ATP, maybe the British government is involved," Medvedev told reporters at the Eaux-Vives tennis club. "It's a tricky situation and like every situation in life, you ask 100 players, everybody's going to give a different opinion. "I can play; I'm going to be happy to play in Wimbledon. I love this tournament. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of National Food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema welcomed a delegation of Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nation (FAO) led by its Representative MS. Florence Rolle. - APP

Key challenges of venture capital industry

Venture capital firms provide funds to small and emerging firms which are at early stages, in exchange of the equity of the firms they are investing in, hoping that these new firms will provide high return to them. Not only do they have control over the decision-making process, venture capital firms also provide strategic advices on business models, mentoring and expertise to the firms to minimize the risk. But there are certain key challenges being faced by venture capital industry of Pakistan. Venture capital firms prefer to invest in the firms which have innovative ideas and give good returns. There is a lack of research institutes in Pakistan, and private sectors do not agree to invest in the research centers. Very few people take patent rights and copyrights

for their products which they want to produce but still after having the patent rights, they find it difficult to stop others from copying their ideas. Another key challenge faced by Pakistan venture capital industry is the late return on investment. Venture capital is a long-term investment (usually four to five years) and it takes time to become successful. Most of the Pakistanis and overseas Pakistanis invest in the real estate but sometimes they have to wait a lot for good returns. If investments take too much time to give the returns, there are chances that the investment will turn zero in case of failure of venture capital project. Acquisition; IPO and merger are the only channels through which a venture capital firm exits. Small and medium companies are not

registered in stock exchange of Pakistan due to high cost and a lot of requirements are to be fulfilled. In Pakistan, if a company wants to register itself, it should be having worth of at least US \$4-5 million and for offshore companies, the requirement is about US \$12-15 million. That's why small and medium sized businesses try to expand their businesses instead of buying another business for expansion. Furthermore, culture of entrepreneurship lacks in Pakistan as people usually with privileged families and business backgrounds prefer doing business in Pakistan. It seems difficult to fresh graduates to go for business as getting finance is difficult in Pakistan so the entrepreneurship level is so low. Secondly, no proper counseling is done to make them clear about their questions of be-

coming a businessman. Pakistani bankers have skills and knowledge in accessing the worth and risk of the projects but they lack knowledge in supporting their clients in the fields of marketing and management. In various countries, VC associations have pool of masters in different limit districts and these experts have in like manner inclusion of running couple of associations. Regardless, if we look at Pakistani circumstance, this part is completely lost. Organizations of U.S., European nations and different nations have more worries on peace issues in Pakistan, because of the worldwide media distortion on such episodes in Pakistan. Other than lawfulness, there is additionally component of trust and certainty on Pakistani endeavors, because of bad performance in business by

few Pakistani organizations. Funding speculators are likewise worried about settling the instability of money streams. As of now, VC organizations are being enlisted under NBFC Rules and Regulations 2003 and SECP has likewise arranged draft rules for Private Equity and Venture Capital Companies 2006. Industry players have few worries on these issues especially enrollment of remote VC organizations with SECP if there should an occurrence of VC interest in Pakistan and administrative measures which reflect examination of VC with common subsidizes by SECP, which is another major concern for venture capital industry of Pakistan. **Memoonalkram Szabist (Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto institute of science and technology)**

G7 criticizes...

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government approval after recent scorching temperatures hit production, in a blow to countries affected by supply shortages because of the war in Ukraine. India, the world's second-largest wheat producer, said that factors including lower wheat production and sharply higher global prices because of the war meant that it was now worried about its own "food security". All export deals agreed before the directive issued on Friday could still be honoured, but all future shipments needed to have government approval. However, exports could also take place if New Delhi approved a request by other governments "to meet their food security needs." The decision came as global agricultural markets were under severe stress due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The traditional bread basket has seen shipments disrupted, with the Ukrainian agriculture minister travelling to Stuttgart for discussions with G7 colleagues on getting its produce out. Some "20 million tonnes" of wheat were sitting in Ukrainian silos and "urgently" needed to be exported, Ozdemir said. Before the invasion, Ukraine exported 4.5 million tonnes of agricultural produce per month through its ports — 12 percent of the planet's wheat, 15 percent of its corn and half of its sunflower oil.

Nation will...

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million people were displaced. Instead of acknowledging Pakistanis' sacrifices, the United States (US) blamed the country for its defeat in the Afghanistan war. "An imported government is imposed on Pakistan via a foreign and internal conspiracy. We will never accept these American slaves. We have to go to Islamabad to give a clear message to this imported government." "Whoever imposed the imported government here, we have to give them a clear message that we are an independent nation." Imran Khan said that Asif Ali Zardari and Nawaz Sharif had ruled the country for 10 years from 2008 to 2018 while Maulana Fazlur Rehman also backed their governments. During their tenures, 400 drone strikes had been carried out in the tribal areas in which several women and children lost their lives. He censured that Zardari and Sharif had never raised voices against the US drone strikes in Pakistan. "These families have been imposed again on Pakistan as they are slaves whose assets are in the US and London. They are imposed after witnessing that a country will see disasters if its institutions are destroyed. He said that the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) is being destroyed by the current rulers after its officers traced the money laundering case against Shehbaz Sharif. The former prime minister said that an FIA officer Dr Rizwan passed away after cardiac arrest while another officer is fighting for life due to a heart attack. FIA is facing destruction as a "murderer" was given the responsibility to supervise it. "FIA is facing the same phase which Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) had done with Karachi police officers who took part in the operation." He said that the current prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and his son are facing Rs40 billion corruption cases while his brother, Nawaz Sharif is absconding and residing in London.

One dead...

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ascertained, it seems that the police vehicle was the target of the blast. Meanwhile, the injured have been shifted to a hospital. The Initial report also revealed that an improvised explosive device (IED) was planted in a motorcycle. The blast occurred in the Iqbal market. Following the blast, the fire brigade reached the site of the incident and doused the flame. Eyewitnesses said that the sound of the blast could be heard in faraway areas. The development comes four days after an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in the Saddar area left one person dead and 13 injured.

Briefs

Israel imposes travel ban on Sheikh Sabri

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, head of the Higher Islamic Council in Occupied Jerusalem, has condemned the Israeli decision to ban his travel abroad for four months, affirming that such measure would not dissuade him from defending the Aqsa Mosque. "One of the blessings Allah has bestowed upon us that He has graced us with the honor of being stationed in Jerusalem and at the Aqsa Mosque, so we will never leave these holy places, God willing," Sheikh Sabri said in press remarks on Monday. "This unjust decision will neither change my position nor prevent or deter me from performing my religious duty towards my people and nation. My defense of the Aqsa Mosque will not stop as long as I am still alive," he added. Sheikh Sabri received on Sunday an order signed by the Israeli interior minister banning his travel abroad for four months at the pretext that his travel would pose a security threat. Sheikh Sabri, who is also a noted Aqsa preacher, is exposed to systematic persecution by the Israeli occupation authority. He has been arrested, interrogated and banned from entering the Aqsa Mosque and traveling to other countries several times before. In this regard, Hamas spokesman Abdul-Latif Qanu strongly denounced the Israeli travel ban that was issued against Sheikh Sabri, describing it as a "crime" and a "violation of the most basic human rights," including the right to freedom of movement. "The decision is a desperate attempt to muzzle the voice of our people and the role of their national figures in defending Jerusalem and the Aqsa Mosque and exposing the Israeli crimes which these holy places are exposed to," the spokesman stated on Monday. - Agencies

ECO chief arrives in Azerbaijan

BAKU: A delegation led by Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Khusrav Noziri arrived in Azerbaijan on May 16, Azernews reports. Noziri is to participate in the third annual session of the Parliamentary Assembly of Economic Cooperation Organization (PAECO). As reported earlier, Azerbaijan will host the third general conference of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Co-operation Organisation in parliament on May 17. Parliament officials from Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan will participate in the event. Participants will first meet with the PAECO Executive Board, as well as the PAECO Committees on Trade, Economic Cooperation, Communication and Coordination and the Committee on Women, Youth and Culture. Azerbaijani Speaker Sahiba Gafarova is going to have a number of bilateral meetings with the delegations on the margins of the conference. The second PAECO General Conference was hosted by the National Assembly of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan from June 1-2, 2021 under the topic "Promoting Parliamentary Partnership for Regional Integration". - Agencies

Dozens of Jewish settlers storm al-Aqsa

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Dozens of Jewish settlers stormed al-Aqsa Mosque in Occupied Jerusalem under Israeli police protection on Monday morning. The settlers entered the Mosque through its Maghariba Gate and toured its courtyards. During their tours at the Islamic holy site, the settlers received lectures from rabbis about the alleged temple mount and a number of them provocatively performed Talmudic prayers. Along the same line, Israeli police forces deliberately cut off the water pipelines to refrigerators in the Bab al-Rahma prayer hall. The incident came as part of the Israeli attempts to take control over the eastern area of Al-Aqsa Mosque, specifically Bab al-Rahma. - Agencies

Pak export of sesamum seeds to China up 102% to \$46 million

"Last year the crop was more than 105,000 MT and the yield was 480 kg per acre. In Pakistan sesamum is grown in more than 65 districts in which Punjab contains 70-80% of the total productions

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan's export of sesamum seeds to China achieved a historical figure of \$45.99 million, rising by 102.49 percent in the first quarter of 2022, said Badar U Zaman, Commercial Counsellor of the Pakistani Embassy. Badar U Zaman told China Economic Net (CEN) that according to the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC), China imported

around 30,923 tons of sesamum seeds in the first quarter of this year and was one of the main destinations for sesamum seed exports from Pakistan, while in the same period in 2021 it was only around 18,444 tons. Now it has increased 67.65 percent by volume and more than 102% percent by value. "The main reason for the increasing trade of this product is that after the second phase of the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement signed, Pakistan's export of sesamum seeds enlarged in

the Chinese market because the export duty is zero on this item and many new exporters of this product have been added to the Chinese Customs list, meanwhile Pakistani exporters cultivated those varieties of the sesame seeds that are demanded in China", he stated. He further said that Chinese Customs data showed that China imported overall about 401,823 tons of sesamum seeds worth around \$600 million from different parts of the world. Niger with around 77,140

tons worth \$116.85 million was founded the country with the largest volume of sesamum seeds exported to China in the first three months of 2022, followed by Togo with \$102.60 million and Sudan with \$98.18 million. Pakistan ranked the sixth and shared around 7.67 percent of total exports to China in the first quarter of this year. Rakesh Pal Khamuani, Director of Kanwal Trading Company Private Limited (Pakistan), a leading sesamum seeds exporter to China told CEN that sesamum seed

is a cash crop with good export prices and the demand is increasing but they still need to improve the traditional method of cultivation and seed quality that would help increase yield per acre. "Last year the crop was more than 105,000 MT and the yield was 480 kg per acre. In Pakistan sesamum is grown in more than 65 districts in which Punjab contains 70-80% of the total productions. The main reason for the export increase is less local consumption and good

price & huge demand that converted farmers to cultivate this crop at larger scale," he added. He further said that still, both governments need to work a lot to improve the export of sesamum seeds, especially since the pandemic affected the exports, and GACC should relax its new registration policy for Pakistani exporters. It is worth mentioning that Pakistan exported 92516.55 tons of sesamum seeds to China worth \$120.44 million dollars in 2021.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary Board of Investment Fareena Mazhar receives Federal Minister for BOI Chaudhry Salik in her office. - DNA

Hezbollah allies suffer losses in polls

BEIRUT: Allies of Lebanese group Hezbollah appear to have suffered losses in Sunday's parliamentary elections in Lebanon, early results showed on Monday. Unofficial results showed that Hezbollah and its Shia ally Amal Movement have retained their seats in the 128-seat parliament. Hezbollah ally, the Free Patriotic Movement, however, won only 17 seats in Sunday's vote, down from 24 in the outgoing parliament. Hezbollah-allied Druze politicians Wiam Wahhab and Talal Arslan lost their seats in Sunday's elections. Independents, meanwhile, won five seats in the new assembly, up from only one in the outgoing parliament, according to preliminary results. Meanwhile, the Lebanese Forces Party, an opponent of Hezbollah, is projected to win 21 seats, up from only 15 in the outgoing parliament. Sunday's parliamentary elections were the first in Lebanon since the 2020 Beirut port explosion that killed more than 200 people, injured thousands and destroyed much of the capital Beirut. The vote was held amid a deep economic crisis that has grappled the Arab country since late 2019, including a massive currency depreciation as well as fuel and medical shortages. Voter turnout in Sunday's polls reached 41%, down from over 49% in the 2018 elections, according to the Interior Ministry. - Agencies

Karabakh horses shine at Royal Windsor Horse Show

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was presented with a gift from President Ilham Aliyev - a Karabakh horse called Glory. The horse presented to the Queen was brought to Windsor Castle and handed over to the new owner with a certificate containing all the information

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Karabakh horses are perhaps one of the most beautiful and graceful creatures on the planet. Strong and powerful, they are a symbol of national heritage and pride. It is believed that the Karabakh horses are one of the oldest breeds in Asia. Colors of the Karabakh horses can be red, buckthorn, brown, bay, gray, or golden-red. Known for their stamina, the Karabakh horses are an ideal mount for Chovgan traditional horse riding. Chovgan, a traditional horse-riding game, played on Karabakh horses, is inscribed on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Thanks to the support of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, major work has been done in recent years to promote national horse breeds as an Azerbaijani brand worldwide. Since 2012, Karabakh horses have been successfully representing Azerbaijan at the Royal Windsor Horse



Show. The Windsor Royal Horse Show is traditionally organized in honor of members of the royal family in the UK. The equestrian show has become an extremely important platform for the promotion of Azerbaijan's ancient culture. This year, Azerbaijan is represented at the equestrian show by a cavalry detachment and a dance ensemble of the State Border Service, which stunned the audience with their performances, Azernews reports.

At the Royal Windsor Horse Show, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II to the throne, Azerbaijan presented a special show "Land of Fire" organized by the Azerbaijani Equestrian Federation with the support of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation. Riders brilliantly demonstrated their horse-riding skills to the sounds of national music. The spectators enjoyed the state flags of Azerbaijan and the United Kingdom fluttering



in the hands of the riders. Colorful show prepared by Honored Artist Nijat Kazimov featured the equestrian performance on Karabakh horses accompanied by the Sarhadchi Dance Ensemble led by Honored Artist, choreographer Farid Ibrahimov. An exciting show, traditional music, and dances literally enchanted the British audience. The show program was greeted with great enthusiasm by the participants in the event.

Furthermore, Queen Elizabeth II received a delegation led by President of the Azerbaijani Equestrian Federation Elchin Guliyev at Windsor Palace. Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was presented with a gift from President Ilham Aliyev - a Karabakh horse called Glory. The horse presented to the Queen was brought to Windsor Castle and handed over to the new owner with a certificate containing all the information.

Global wheat prices hit new record high

JAKARTA: Wheat prices surged to a new record high after India decided to ban exports of the commodity as a heat-wave hit production. The price jumped to 435 euros (\$453) per tonne as the European market opened on Monday. Global wheat prices have soared on supply fears since Russia's February attack on agricultural powerhouse Ukraine, which previously accounted for 12 percent of global exports. The spike, exacerbated by fertilizer shortages and poor harvests, has fuelled inflation globally and raised fears of famine and social unrest in poorer countries. India, the world's second-largest wheat producer, said on Saturday that it was banning exports after its hottest March on record. New Delhi said factors including lower production and sharply higher global prices meant it was worried about the food security of its own 1.4 billion people. Export deals agreed before the directive issued on May 13 could still be honoured but future shipments needed government approval, it said. However, exports could also take place if New Delhi approved requests from other governments "to meet their food security needs." India, which possesses major buffer stocks, previously said it was ready to help fill some of the supply shortages caused by the Ukraine conflict. The export ban drew sharp criticism from the Group of Seven industrialised nations, which said that such measures "would worsen the crisis" of rising commodity prices. - Agencies

Turkey to continue serving as mediator in Ukraine-Russia war

ANKARA: No other leader has taken as much initiative for peace as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, says communications head. Turkey is a regional stabilizing power that has done its part to ensure peace and stability, particularly during the Russia-Ukraine war, according to the country's communications director. Speaking at a conference titled "War in Ukraine: Regional and Humanitarian Consequences" in Ankara, Turkey's capital, Presidency's Director of Communications Fahrettin Altun said the COVID-19 pandemic, regional political and economic tensions, and hot conflicts have shattered the global balance, and the Turkish government is working to resolve the crises. "The constructive and stabilizing role Turkey has been playing for the past two decades with regards to the region and globe had to be acknowledged in the last few months, even by those denying it," Altun said, adding that the country's efforts for regional security and crisis resolution have somehow been overlooked by some circles. - Agencies

Russian ruble's return to pre-war levels

MOSCOW: Russia has bailed out the ruble with the help of capital controls and higher interest rates, making it the world's top performing currency year to date. Yet, it remains too early to say whether the country's economy is back on its feet. How should a country's economy be evaluated? Does a currency appreciating against its counterparts indicate that the economy's wheels are turning smoothly? When it comes to Russia, things are quite complicated because it is a country at war and an economy in turmoil, with surging inflation and sharp economic contraction, mainly due to heavy sanctions imposed by Western countries. This is a country that has faced Western sanctions since 2014, when it illegally took over Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and this time, it appears better prepared to deal with an

initial wave of economic disruption than it was eight years ago. In particular, Russia's currency, the ruble, surprised the world after it bounced back from the West's initial sanctions that sunk it to lows of 150 to the US dollar in early March. By mid-May, it had risen to about 61.25 - its highest in 28 months. Some think this recovery is a sign of economic resilience, but well-known economists have warned that things are not bright as they appear. "The initial financial panic has indeed subsided, but that doesn't mean that the Russian economy is doing well. It's no way to say the Russian economy is resilient," said Sergei Guriev, an exiled Russian economist and professor at Sciences Po in Paris. In an exclusive interview with Anadolu Agency, Guriev said the current forecasts for the Russian economy are not promising at all, noting that the Russian Central Bank's projections for 2022 showed that the economy would experience a recession of 8% to 10%. "Instead of pre-war forecasts of plus 3% growth, recent leaks suggest that internal government forecasts point to a minus 12% GDP change in 2022," underlined the seasoned academic, who served as rector at the New Economic School in Moscow until he left the country in 2013. - Agencies



ISLAMABAD: Executive Committee meeting of League of Parliamentarians for Al Quds, based in Istanbul, which has MPs from over 100 countries, also attended by Turkiye's Finance Minister, Dr Nuruddin Nebatiand representative from Indonesia, Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, Palestine & Pakistan. - DNA

Somalia's foreign partners hail peaceful polls

MOGADISHU: Somalia's international partners on Monday welcomed the election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who takes office after months of political instability and faces crises including a violent insurgency and devastating drought. Residents in the capital Mogadishu raced through the streets banging metal cans and fired guns into the air in celebration as the result of the marathon poll was announced around midnight. Many are hoping that the vote - which concluded peacefully but was dogged by claims of irregularities - will draw a line under a political crisis that has lasted well over a year. Outgoing president Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed's term ended in February 2021 without an election and the protracted tussle for power that followed turned violent at times and caused divisions at the highest levels of government. Somalia's international partners had repeatedly warned that the election delays were a dangerous distraction from the fight against Al-Shabaab insurgents, who have been trying to overthrow the government for more than a decade. On Monday, the UK's minister for Africa congratulated Mohamud, who ruled Somalia between 2012 and 2017 and is the first president to win a second term in the troubled Horn of Africa nation. The UK "looks forward to continuing its close work to support on building stability, tackling Al-Shabaab and supporting those affected by the devastating drought", minister Vicky Ford said on Twitter. Mohamud has promised to transform Somalia into "a peaceful country that is at peace with the world". The East African regional bloc IGAD said Mohamud's victory was "a clear testimony of the trust and confidence that the people of Somalia have in his leadership qualities". Somalia has not held a one-person, one-vote election in 50 years and few of its 15 million people played any part in choosing Mohamud. Instead, polls follow a complex indirect model, where state legislatures and clan delegates pick lawmakers for the national parliament, which in turn chooses the president. - Agencies

Raeisi offers congratulations to UAE's MBZ

TEHRAN: Iranian President Ebrahim Raeisi has extended his congratulations to Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan over his appointment as president of the United Arab Emirates, expressing hope that the two countries would further improve relations to serve common interests. In his congratulatory message on Monday, Raeisi hoped that the mutual relations, which were established during the rule of late UAE president Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, would be expanded with wisdom and in line with interests of the two countries. The Iranian president also hoped that Tehran and Abu Dhabi would witness the promotion of mutual relations in all fields. Sheikh Khalifah, who was also the ruler of Abu Dhabi emirate, passed away on Friday at the age of 73. Sheikh Khalifah was battling illness for several years and had long ceased having involvement in day-to-day affairs. According to the UAE constitution, Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, will act as president until the federal council, consisting of the rulers of the seven emirates, meets within 30 days to elect a new president. Back in August, Raeisi said that the Islamic Republic is determined and open to the expansion of relations with the United Arab Emirates, stressing that Tehran sees no boundaries to the promotion of such ties, particularly trade and economic ones. In recent months, Iran and the UAE have intensified efforts to rebuild relations affected by the years-long war in Yemen and other regional issues. A huge re-exporting hub in the Persian Gulf, the UAE has been a major supplier of goods and machinery to Iran since 2018 when Tehran came under a series of unilateral economic sanctions by the United States. - Agencies

Briefs

PM directs wheat procurement

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressing his displeasure over the delay in procurement of wheat by the provinces stressed completion of the process by June 1. He directed the Minister for Food Security and Research to set up an urgent committee for transparent distribution of imported wheat in the provinces. The prime minister said the people could not be made to suffer and the federal government would provide flour at a lower price. He said such a delaying approach could not be tolerated and vowed that the federal government would extend all possible assistance to provinces. He said beyond politics, the federal government would do everything possible to help the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. PM Sharif said serving the poor was the responsibility of the government. - APP

Panjshir resistance attack Taliban

DNA

KABUL: One local resident told the British media his unarmed elderly relative had been shot by the group, who seized power in Afghanistan last August. Another saw a neighbour beaten by the Taliban until he fell unconscious. A local Taliban spokesman denied any abuses had taken place or that any of the group's members had been killed.

The fighting is localised and at this stage does not present a challenge to the Taliban's control of the country, but it is the most significant sustained armed opposition the group has faced since coming to power. Panjshir was a bastion of anti-Taliban resistance during the group's first stint in power in the 1990s. In recent days, fighters belonging to the National Resistance Front launched a guerrilla attack on Taliban forces in the area, who responded by sending a large number of reinforcements to Panjshir. The NRF is headed by Ahmad Massoud, the son of a legendary anti-Taliban fighter, who fled Afghanistan following the Taliban takeover. The group is also supported by some former commanders who used to be part of the Afghan army. Speaking on condition of anonymity, local sources told the BBC the fighting erupted over a religious dispute. They said the Taliban attempted to arrest a Panjshiri cleric who had decreed the Muslim festival of Eid should actually be celebrated a day after the Taliban said it should. Taliban forces were ambushed and a number were allegedly killed - something Taliban officials have denied. Details on casualty figures, and even the extent of the fighting, are difficult to ascertain. The Taliban appear to be downplaying the clashes, while claims by the NRF often seem exaggerated. Two local sources said that about 15 unarmed civilians had been killed by the Taliban in Panjshir so far.

Indonesia: Over a dozen killed as tour bus hits billboard

NEWS DESK

JAKARTA: At least fourteen people were killed in Indonesia's East Java province when a bus carrying domestic tourists crashed into an advertising billboard. Nineteen people were also injured in the crash, including the bus driver. East Java traffic police chief Latief Usman told AP news agency that police were still investigating the cause of the accident, but added that the driver reportedly appeared sleepy before the collision. The 31 passengers come from Surabaya, the capital of East Java province. They were returning from a trip to a popular mountain resort in Central Java when the crash occurred.

Putin warns Finland, Sweden over NATO

"The only country that threatens European security, and is now openly waging a war of aggression, is Russia"

AGENCIES

KYIV: Russian President Vladimir Putin warned Finland and Sweden on Monday to expect a "response" for applying to join NATO as Ukraine braced for a new push by Moscow's forces in its eastern Donbas region. Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson on Monday confirmed her country would apply to join the military alliance, the day after Finland - which shares a 1,300-kilometre (800-mile) border with Russia - said the same.

The two Nordic countries are giving up decades of military non-alignment over fears they could be next in line following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine on February 24. Russia, whose war has sparked global outrage, killed thousands and created millions of refugees, warned that NATO's expansion would have consequences. The move poses "no direct threat for us... but the expansion of military infrastructure to these territories will certainly provoke our response", Putin told a meeting of a Moscow-led security alliance. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov had earlier called it a "grave mistake with far-reaching consequences". Russia has already suspended electricity supplies to Finland, citing payment issues. But Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin told lawmakers: "Our security environment has fundamentally changed. The only country that threatens European security, and is



now openly waging a war of aggression, is Russia." Despite the resources of its giant neighbour, Ukraine has managed to repel Russian forces for longer than many initially thought, fortified by weapons and cash from Kyiv's Western allies. NATO on Sunday promised its open-ended support, with German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock saying it would provide military assistance "for as long as Ukraine needs". Since failing to take the capital Kyiv in the early weeks of the war, Moscow is currently focusing on the eastern region of Donbas, near the Russian border and home to pro-Russian separatists. "We are preparing for new attempts by Rus-

sian troops had regained control of territory near Kharkiv, which has been under constant attack since the invasion. Arestovich said the Russian troops that had been withdrawn were being sent towards Lugansk and "their task is to take Severodonetsk," the easternmost city still held by Ukraine. Ukraine's presidency reported Monday that two people were killed and nine were wounded, including a child, in shelling on a Severodonetsk hospital. The fall of Severodonetsk would grant the Kremlin de facto control of Lugansk, one of two regions - along with Donetsk - that comprise Donbas. But Russia's attempt to cross a river to encircle it has been repelled with heavy losses of equipment, according to Lugansk governor Sergiy Gaiday. And Russian-occupied railway bridges leading to Severodonetsk were blown up, the Ukrainian military said on Facebook late Sunday. Fierce fighting over almost three months of war has caused six million refugees to flee Ukraine, and another eight million have been internally displaced, according to UN agencies. But some are trying to wait it out. In Lysychansk, on the other side of the river from Severodonetsk, a policeman tried in vain to evacuate Angelina Abakumova and her children. "It is dangerous here now. Then it changes and it becomes dangerous over there. What is the point of going back and forth?" she told AFP, on her way back to her basement.

Sana urges Khan to share evidence of life threat

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah on Monday urged former prime minister Imran Khan Niazi to share solid and concrete evidence of possible threat to his life if any with the interior ministry. "If former prime minister Imran Niazi has any concrete evidence of possible threat to his life, he should immediately share it with the Interior Ministry," he said in a statement issued here. He said the government was ready to conduct a full investigation into the matter. Judicial Commission could also be set in this regard in case the former premier wanted, he added. He said the Judicial Commission could make an independent decision after reviewing the evidence and information provided by Imran Niazi. "If Imran Niazi does not provide information about the danger to his life, then like the American conspiracy, this statement will be considered as mere a political stunt," he said. The minister regretted that the former Prime Minister was presenting threat to his life as a political stunt. - APP

Sweden embassy to hold national youth dialogue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The embassy of Sweden in Pakistan will organize a youth dialogue on Tuesday here at the Swedish Ambassador's Residence.

The dialogue will focus on the right to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment and engage youth, multilateral organizations, civil society, and policymakers to have a focused conversation on what such a right means in the local context, said the spokesperson of Sweden Embassy. The youth dialogue is being organized with UNDP, WWF Pakistan, and Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force and will be held under the chair of Henrik Persson, Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan.

The event further aims to bring more awareness to the national youth in their role at a multilateral level and at the policy-making tables, such as the Stockholm+50 International Meeting and the climate negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's COPs (conferences of parties).

Indian court limits Muslim gatherings at mosque

FOREIGN DESK

LUCKNOW: A court on Monday banned large Muslim prayer gatherings in one of north India's highest-profile mosques after a survey team found relics of the Hindu god Shiva and other Hindu symbols there, a lawyer involved in the case said.

The judge at the court in Varanasi - Hinduism's holiest city and the site of the historic Gyanvapi mosque - ruled that Islamic gatherings there should be limited to 20 people, lawyer H S Jain said. The court ordered the survey of the mosque after five women - represented by Jain - sought permission to perform Hindu rituals in one part of it, saying a Hindu temple once stood on the site.

The Gyanvapi mosque, located in the constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is one of several mosques in northern Uttar Pradesh that Hindu hardliners believe - in common with some other religious sites - was built on top of demolished Hindu temples. Police said the court order would help maintain law and order at a time when hardline Hindu groups tied to Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had stepped up demands to excavate inside some mosques and to permit searches in the Taj Mahal mausoleum. Leaders of India's 200 million Muslims view such moves as attempts to undermine their rights to free worship and religious expression, with the BJP's tacit agreement.

Imran Khan ensured fool proof security

ISLAMABAD: In the light of Interior Ministry's directives, police and other law enforcement agencies' specified personnel have been deployed to ensure foolproof security to former Prime Minister Imran Khan, said ministry's Spokesperson here on Monday. The spokesperson in a statement said a total of 94 personnel of police and Frontier Constabulary (FC) have been deployed for the security of former Prime Minister Imran Khan's Bani Gala House. Out of total 94 personnel, 22 were from Islamabad police while 72 from FC were deployed for the purpose. In addition, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police has also deployed 36 and GilgitBaltistan 6 police personnel for the security of the former prime minister by their respective governments. Similarly, 26 personnel of SMS Security Company and 9 of ASKARI Security Company have also been deputed for the security of Bani Gala House. For the movement of former prime minister out of the capital, four vehicles of Islamabad Police with 23 personnel and one vehicle of Rangers with 5 personnel were present full time, the Spokesperson said. He said the Threat Assessment Committee under the Interior Ministry was continuously reviewing the security issues of former premier. - APP

5 Palestinians kidnaped by IOF in W. Bank

WEST BANK: The Israeli occupation forces (IOF) kidnaped at dawn Monday at least 15 Palestinian citizens during campaigns in different West Bank areas. According to local sources, the detainees are from Ramallah, Bireh, Tulkarem, Jenin, Qalqilya, Bethlehem and al-Khalil. Meanwhile, the Israeli army claimed that Palestinian gunmen opened fire at its forces who stormed Yamun town in Jenin to make arrests, adding that no one of its soldiers was injured in the shooting. In a separate incident, the Israeli occupation police handed on Sunday morning Sheikh Ekrima Sabri an order signed by the Israeli interior minister banning his travel abroad for four months at the pretext that his travel would pose a security threat. Sheikh Sabri, head of the Higher Islamic Council in Occupied Jerusalem, said the Israeli decision was unfair and would not prompt him to change his positions or discourage him from performing his religious duty towards his people and nation. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijan Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov, called on Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi. - DNA

Somalia's new president elected by 327 people

NEWS DESK

MOGADISHU: Somalia's former leader Hassan Sheikh Mohamud has been elected president after a final vote that was only open to the country's MPs. He defeated the current president, Mohamed Abudallahi Farmajo, who has been in office since 2017. The ballot was limited to Somalia's 328 MPs due to security concerns over holding a wider election, and one of them did not cast a vote. Mr Mohamud received 214 votes, defeating Mr Farmajo who won 110 votes. Three MPs are reported to have spoiled their ballots. The unusual circumstances highlight Somalia's security issues as well as the lack of democratic accountability. The result marks a comeback for Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, who served as Somalia's president between 2012 and 2017 before he was defeated by Mr Farmajo. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud: Who is Somalia's new leader. The elections - which were hotly contested and went to a third round - were delayed for almost 15 months due to infighting and security issues. Mr Mohamud was sworn in shortly after the final results were announced, prompting supporters in the capital to cheer and fire guns into the air. He will serve for



the next four years. In the vote on Sunday, hundreds of parliamentarians cast their ballots at a fortified aircraft hangar in the capital Mogadishu. Explosions could be heard nearby as voting was taking place, but police said no casualties were reported. As the incoming president, Mr Mohamud will have to deal with the impact of an ongoing drought in which the UN says 3.5 million Somalis are at risk of severe famine. But the big task he faces is to wrest control of much of Somalia from al-Shabab. The al-Qaeda-linked Islamist militant group continues to dominate large parts of the country and carries out frequent attacks in Mogadishu and elsewhere.

'Ceasefire reached to evacuate wounded from Azovstal'

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia's defence ministry said Monday that an agreement has been reached to evacuate injured soldiers from the Azovstal steel plant in Ukraine's port city of Mariupol. "An agreement was reached with representatives of the Ukrainian military blocked at Azovstal in Mariupol to evacuate the wounded," the ministry said. It added that a "regime of silence" was introduced for the duration of the evacuation and that the Ukrainian soldiers would be taken to a hospital in the nearby town of Novozovsk. There was no immediate confirmation from Ukrainian officials. Hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers remained holed up in the underground tunnels of the huge Azovstal steel factory that has been besieged by Russian forces for weeks after Moscow claimed control of Mariupol. Ukraine's Azov battalion, which has led the defence of Mariupol, has posted desperate videos from the plant, saying soldiers are dying from their wounds there.

RCCI delegation calls on Information Minister



RAWALPINDI: A delegation led by Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce President Nadeem Rauf called on Information and Broadcasting Minister Maryam Aurangzeb in Islamabad here on Monday. The delegation included group leader Sohail Altaf, president of the small chamber Sheikh Asif Idrees and chamber member Ikram Abbasi. Talking to the delegation, Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb said that the top priority of the government is to provide a conducive environment for trade and business. Pakistan's economy is facing many challenges, the business community is the backbone of the country's economy, she added. Welcoming the suggestions of the private sector and the Chamber of Commerce for the economic revival, she lauded RCCI for planning to arrange the Gems, Jewelry and Fashion Exhibition. Chamber President Nadeem Rauf briefed Federal Minister Maryam Aurangzeb on the ongoing activities of the Chamber. He said that more than 50 stalls would be set up in the 3rd RCCI Gems & Jewelry Exhibition. Exhibitors from all over the country are participating in the exhibition. Group Leader Sohail Altaf said that the business community is deeply concerned over the current situation of economic and political uncertainty. He urged the government to take stakeholders on board and devise policy in consultation with the business community. The exhibition will be held from May 20 to 22 at a local hotel in Islamabad. - DNA