



Islamabad POST

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Biden reestablishes US troop presence in Somalia

Detailed News On Page-07

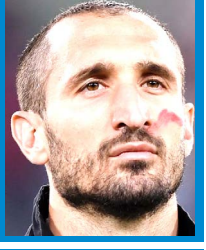
France names first female PM in thirty years

Detailed News On Page-08



Chiellini says goodbye to Juventus fans

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Imran culprit behind crises: Marriyum

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Tuesday that former Prime Minister Imran Khan was the "culprit" behind economic catastrophe, inflation and unemployment in the country. In a tweet, she said that Imran would have to be accountable for the injustice done to the people and he could not escape through political dramas and lying. Marriyum also shared a chart of statistics regarding the country's development during the rule of PML-N from 2013 to 2018 and PTI rule from 2018 to April 2022. According to the chart, the value of dollar increased from Rs 116 in 2018 to Rs 189 in 2022. - APP

Elections to take place after reforms

ISLAMABAD: JUI-F chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman Tuesday said that the coalition government would move towards elections only after introducing electoral reforms in some areas. "The election process will now be finalised through mutual consultation, Fazl said in an interview with BBC Urdu, declining to comment on the duration of electoral reforms. Regarding speculations over immediate elections, the JUI-F chief further added that only one and a half years are left and the coalition government cannot expand its tenure beyond this period. "We have just stepped out of murky waters, so there is no point going back therein", he said in an apparent reference to the political crises the country had been facing for the last few months. Fazl asserted that the country's biggest problem at the moment is the economic crisis which needs to be fixed. - DNA

Announcement

Ambassador of UAE Hamad Alzaabi has written an article about the late President of UAE Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The article appears on the Opinion page - Editor

Inside...

- CS vows to stand the course till polio was stamped out - Page 02
- Launching of awareness campaign against TIP, SOM - Page 03
- MCI to amend firefighting rules for commercial buildings - Page 04
- Buffalo shooting a racist, deprave act - Page 05
- Swedish embassy holds Youth dialogue on clean environment - Page 06
- Pak NA Speaker chairs PAECO executive council meeting - Page 07
- Pakistan, KSA reiterate desire to further strengthen ties - Page 08



ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, receives General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of the Army Staff, who offered condolences on the sad demise of late Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, "May Allah bless his soul". - DNA

Imran praises SC verdict on Article 63 A Khan requests the top court to hear PM Shehbaz and his family's corruption cases

DNA

KOHAT: Former prime minister Imran Khan Tuesday urged the Supreme Court to hear the alleged corruption cases against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his family after the court's decision on Article 63(A). In a major development, the SC ruled that the votes of dissident members of the Parliament (MPs), cast against their parliamentary party's directives, cannot be counted. In his address during the Kohat jalsa, the PTI chairman praised the Supreme Court's decision and said the

Continued on Page 06

PTI leaders urge PM, CM Punjab to resign

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The PTI - which was removed from power last month through a vote of no-confidence - rejoiced the Supreme Court's verdict on Article 63(A) and demanded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shabaz resign from office. The PTI had, before the no-confidence motion, said that the defected members of the parliament should not

Continued on Page 06

Ukrainian troops surrender in Mariupol

NEWS DESK

MARIUPOL: More than 250 Ukrainian fighters surrendered to Russian forces at the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol and Kyiv said on Tuesday it had ordered its full garrison to evacuate, bringing an apparent end to the bloodiest battle in Europe for decades. Reuters saw buses leave the steelworks overnight and five of them arrive in the Russian-held town of Novoazovsk, where Moscow said the wounded would be treated. In one, marked with the Latin letter 'Z' that symbolises Russia's assault, wounded men were stacked on stretchers three bunks

Continued on Page 06

Sweden, Finland to hand in NATO applications

AGENCIES

STOCKHOLM: Andersson says Sweden and Finland will move together on Wednesday to hand in their respective applications to join NATO. "In Sweden and Finland we also agree to go hand in hand through this entire process and

Continued on Page 06

Terror acts becoming serious threat to peace

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR— Amidst continued efforts for reconciliation between government in Pakistan and banned militant group Tehrik Taliban Pakistan, the escalating deadly violent terror acts has not only put at strange the custodian of law and order in Pakistan but also in other regional countries. After deadly suicide attack against faithful at Imamia Jamia Masjid Peshawar on March 4th 2022 last, the Islamic States (IS) militants also called Daesh has claimed responsibility for targeting two persons from Sikh community in outskirts of Peshawar on Sunday last is a big question before the government. However, soon after Sunday violent acts, the custodians of law and order held series of emergency consultations, followed

Continued on Page 06

Gen Faiz in Kabul for talks with TTP

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR—Former ISI Chief and Corps Commander Peshawar Gen. Faiz is in Kabul since Monday whereas he is leading a high level team in connection with talks for reconciliation with banned TTP. The dialogues between government of Pakistan and banned TTP is being brokered by Haqqani Network headed by Interior Minister in Emirate Islami Afghanistan Siraj Ud Din Haqqani. Siraj Haqqani has made

Continued on Page 06

SC issues verdict

Dissident lawmakers vote won't be counted

Concerning the issue of disqualification, the court says Parliament should look into the issue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday announced its opinion on presidential reference seeking interpretation of Article 63-A of the Constitution and stated that the vote of dissident lawmakers would not be counted in the Parliament. In the majority verdict of 3-2, Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, and Justice Munib Akhtar agreed that dissident members' votes should not be counted, while Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal disagreed with the verdict. Concerning the issue of lifetime disqualification of the dissident members, the court

Forces kill two wanted TTP terrorists

DNA

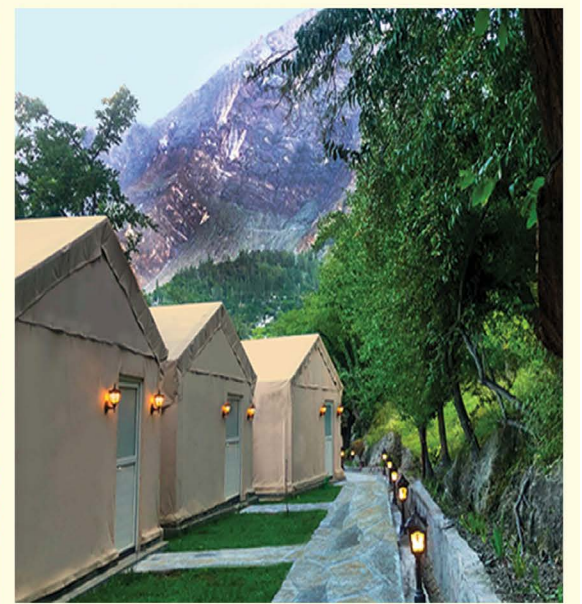
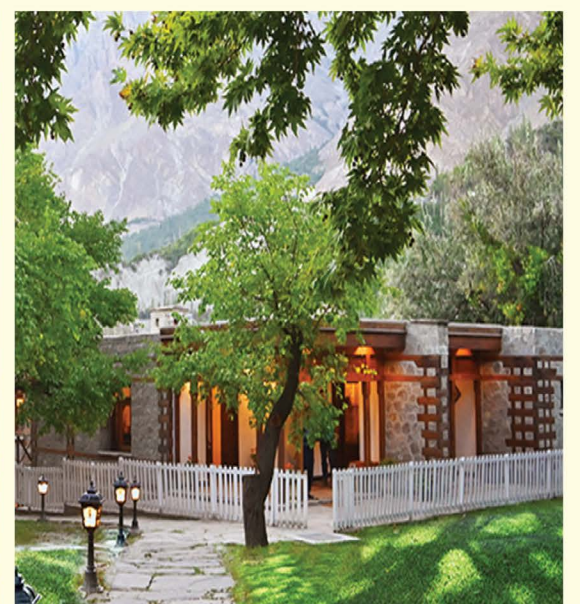
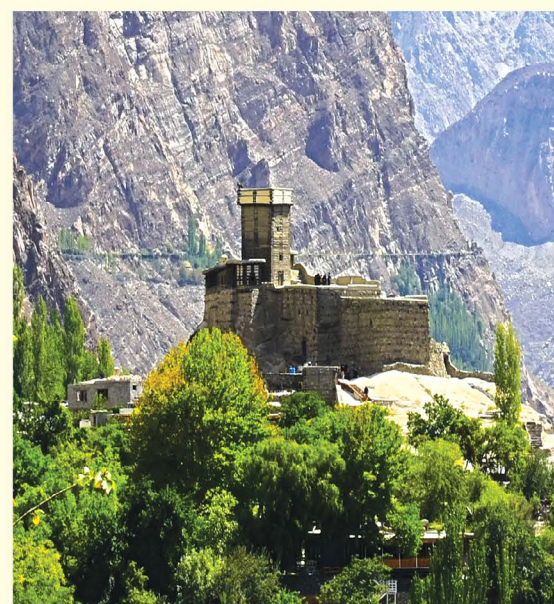
RAWALPINDI: Two most wanted terrorists were killed by security forces in Boya, North Waziristan during an operation, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said Tuesday. The men were identified as

Continued on Page 06

ECP reserves decision on disqualification

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) reserved its decision on Tuesday on the disqualification references for the 25 dissident Punjab MPAs of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Punjab Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi had sent the disqualification reference against the PTI's dissident members to the ECP. Arguments in the case were completed. The counsel for the dissident

Continued on Page 06



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CS vows to stand the course till polio was stamped out

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr Shahzad Khan Bangash said that recent cases from North Waziristan will not demoralize and deter us from the course as we will keep on pushing till the virus was wiped out of the region and children were protected from the incurable disease. He said this while chairing Provincial Task Force Meeting here Tuesday at his office to review status of preparedness for the upcoming round of National Immunization Drive (NID) starting from May 23, 2022 in the province. The meeting was co-chaired by Provincial Health Minister Taimur Saleem Jhagra in attendance with representatives of Polio Oversight Board including POB Chair, Dr Christopher Elias BMGF, Regional Director UNICEF, Dr. George Laryea-Adjei, Regional Director WHO, Dr. Ahmed Al-Mandhari, Director Polio Program BMGF, Dr. Jay Wenger, Director Polio Eradication,

UNICEF Mr. Steven Director Endemics, BMGF, Mr. Aidan O'Leary, GPEI Director WHO, Director Polio EMRO WHO Dr. Hamid Jafari, country head of Rotary International Mr. Aziz Memon, Commissioners of all divisions, Coordinators National & Provincial EOCs, Director EPI, representatives of partner organizations and health department. Dr Shahzad Bangash said that certain challenges in the pockets of southern parts of the province along with population movement are some of the hiccups hampering efforts for polio eradication. "However, he said that great gains have been made in the fight against polio and every effort will be made by the government to sustain those gains along with fixing the remaining gaps", he maintained. Provincial Health Minister Taimur Saleem Jhagra, during his comments, said that there is no denying the fact that significant achievement has been made in polio eradication yet microlevel challenges were still there and need adaptation of strategies for the quick fixes. He said that

pragmatic solution based on ground challenges were need of the hour adding that it was not time for blame games rather for finding solutions. Taimur Jhagra said that we need to create greater health ownership of the polio programme at district levels adding that government was focusing on improving primary healthcare system across the board so that fruits of these efforts are reaped by all and sundry. "Small strides in right direction leads to fundamental gains" he said, adding that a lot of excellent work is happening at the field level and the government remains committed to polio eradication with the support and guidance of all technical partners. Chair of Polio Oversight Board & President Global Development BMGF, Dr Christopher Elias, said that new cases from North Waziristan were disappointing but not surprising as we knew it from the environmental samples. He congratulated the leadership of the government at all levels saying that the gains made in the fight against polio would not have been possible without that.



ISLAMABAD: Hina Rabbani Khar, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs signing the condolence book at Palestinian embassy to condole the death of Palestinian journalist by Israeli occupational forces. – DNA

UAF opens portal for entrance test

FAISALABAD: University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) has opened its portal to facilitate the students for online apply for the entrance test of under-graduate programmes. According to the Convener Admission Committee Dr. Rana Nadeem Abbass, May 27 was fixed as last date for submission of registration fee for entry test whereas the documents for registration could be uploaded up to May 28. He said that entry test would be held on June 5, 2022 and in this connection, test centers were established in Faisalabad, Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Layyah, Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalpur, Toba Tek Singh, Burewala and Depalpur. The candidate who are appearing in the intermediate (part-2) equivalent examination or pass the intermediate exams can apply for admission to undergraduate degrees programme offered the UAF at its main campus as well as at its sub-campuses of Toba Tek Singh, Burewala-Vehari and Depalpur-Okara. The admission will be granted on the basis of marks obtained in Matric, Intermediate and entrance test, he said, adding that admission of the candidate would be confirmed after declaration of intermediate result and on fulfilling minimum criteria for the degree programme. More information in this regard could be obtained from university website www.uaf.edu.pk, he added. – APP

Commissioner Zahid directs WASA to start de-silting immediately

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: A high level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Divisional Commissioner Zahid Husain regarding de-silting of channels and roadside drains to ensure flow of water in possible emergency rains in the coming monsoon season in which Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad, MD WASA Jabbar Anwar, Chief Officer Metropolitan Corporation Chaudhry Zubair Husain, Deputy Director Development Rana Tahir and officers of other concerned departments were also present.

During the meeting it was decided that de silting of drains at Dijkot road would started today Wednesday and WASA will have the support of other auxiliary departments, including the Metropolitan Corporation. The Divisional Commissioner clarified that de silting of drains before the monsoon season is an important task in which responsible implementation of the comprehensive plan is essential. In this regard, daily target should be set and implemented. He said that he himself will continuously inspect the de-silting work while speedy measures should be the priority.

The Deputy Commissioner said that ensuring early standard de-silting is the most urgent requirement to deal with the situation effectively during the monsoon season. He said that the district administration would provide all possible administrative support to the concerned departments including WASA but formulate an effective work plan so that the targets could be completed before the monsoon season at all costs. During the meeting MD WASA briefed de silting plan and the available resources.

Atif Munir elected as Vice District Governor of Lion Club

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has been elected Second Vice District Governor of the District 305-N1 of Lion Club International for the year 2022-23. He bagged hundred percent votes while only one vote was declared invalid. Lion Club International is one of the biggest and leading global NGO working for the welfare of the marginalized sectors of the society. Its office bear-

ers are elected through voting and getting 100% vote is a major and unique privilege for Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh. Mr. Sheikh has thanked voters of the Lion Club and resolved to continue the legacy of serving humanity with a renewed pledge and vigour. "I shall try my best to make Lion District 305-N1 as one of the most vibrant and effective District of Pakistan", he said and added that God fearing philanthropists would be motivated to become part of the Lion Club to work in an organized manner to weed out poverty, illiteracy,

disease and other prevailing social ills. The business community has also welcomed the election of Atif Munir Sheikh as second vice District Governor and hoped that he would effectively exploit his personal and business linkages with the local communities to usher a new era of serving vulnerable segments. They were confident that Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh would not only continue the small projects but also initiate major welfare programs with foreign funding and thus play his instrumental role in mitigating the sufferings of the downtrodden.



DNA

LALAMUSA: Former Federal Minister and senior PML N leader Ch. Jaffar Iqbal reading Daily Islamabad POST in his Lalamusa office. Senior journalist Gulzar Ahmed Noshi is also present on the occasion. – DNA

CM Hamza seeks water recycling plan for Murree

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shahbaz on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to formulate a water recycling plan to overcome water shortage in Murree. Chairing a meeting at Government House Murree during his visit, the CM directed the

authorities to prepare and submit him a water recycling plan. Majid Zahoor, Imran Goraya, DC Rawalpindi, RPO Rawalpindi, CPO Rawalpindi and others officers were present on the occasion. The CM directed to hold an inquiry about the construction of illegal buildings and sought a report that how many buildings were constructed without approved maps or authority's permission. He also announced restoration of Iqbal Library and revamping of the expressway. Similarly, walking street and 'Pindi Point' would also be restored besides renovation and beautification of link roads. Faulty streetlights would also be repaired, he said and emphasized that special attention should be paid to solid waste management. Infrastructure and standard of munic-

ipal services should be improved, the CM said adding that the general bus stand should be restored by June end. A modern system should also be installed for tourists' count and traffic information, he said and further instructed the authorities to activate the online portal of Murree without any delay. Control rooms of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority and the tourism department should be set up to deal with any untoward incident, he added. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Noor ul Amin Mengal briefed the CM about Murree's improvement plan. The CM was informed that nearly 600 buildings without maps and prior approval of the authorities concerned were constructed during last four years.

Govt expedites work on Rs30bn irrigation projects

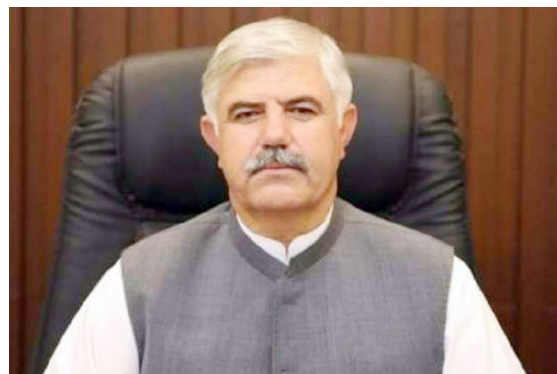
PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has expedited work on Rs30 billion projects started with an assistance of the Federal Government for provision of irrigation water to the agriculture lands in the province. Under the National Agriculture Programme, the KP government is focusing on reconstruction and pavements of watercourses to provide irrigation water to the tail ends fields. An official of KP Agriculture Department told APP on Tuesday that 25,000 new watercourses would be constructed during 2018-23 in the province.

He said only 25,000 watercourses were constructed during last 70 years in KP. Under National Agriculture Emergency Program, he said that 11 agriculture and livestock projects worth Rs45 billion have been approved from Federal Government for increasing milk and meat production besides ensuring self-sufficiency in food services. He said KP's first ever food security policy was approved. He said that 1,200 livestock farms should be completed in KP by 2023. The official said 300,00 Calfs would be fattened by 2023. – APP

CM KP Mahmood opens park

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan on Tuesday paid a visit to Hazar Khwani area of Peshawar where he formally inaugurated "Gulistan-e-Hazar Khwani" the largest park of Peshawar City which has been completed at a cost of Rs. 370 million. Hazar Khwani Park covering 280 kanal of land has the best recreational facilities for about 2 million population of the area. The chief minister also inaugurated newly constructed building of Shaikh Abad Girls High School which has been completed at a cost of Rs. 50 million.



Members Provincial Cabinet Taimur Salim Jhagra, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Faisal Amin, Kamran Bangash, MNA Shaikat Ali, Members Provincial Assembly Fazal Elahi, Asif Khan and others relevant political figures were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Hazar Khwani Park, the chief minister has termed this park as a gift of the provincial government for Peshawarites and added that the establishment of park has further enhanced the beauty of Peshawar City. He said that separate

day in a week would be allocated for the families to visit this mega park. Touching upon the other important development initiatives of his government, the chief minister said that old parks across the province including Peshawar were being rehabilitated whereas PC-I worth Rs. 14 billion for the construction of missing link of ring road had also been submitted to relevant forum for approval. Similarly he added that in order to resolve the issues of vehicular traffic in Peshawar City, work was in full swing on the construction of new general bus stand outside the city which on completion will provide all time solution to the issue.

Corps Commander visits Cholera affected areas

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Lieutenant General Sarfraz Ali, Commander Quetta Corps visited Cholera affected areas in Pir Koh, Dera Bugti on Tuesday. Corps Commander was given detailed update on relief activities of FC Balochistan in aid of civil power. Corps Commander also met local people and assured them army's all out support to bring them comfort and supply of necessary assistance including water, establishment of medical facilities and provision of medicines for treatment of cholera. Doctors and paramedics are busy in providing medical care to cholera affected people.

ACP, Spanish Consulate jointly organize "Flamenco"

Ambassador of Spain Manuel Durán Giménez-Rico said that Flamenco has been an art for many years and has been our cultural dance

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi and the Honorary Consulate of Spain jointly organized a special cultural dance of Spain "Flamenco" in AC Auditorium-I. The concert was attended by President Arts Council Muhammad Ahmad Shah, Members

Governing Body, the Ambassador of Spain; Deputy Ambassador, Honorary Consul General of Spain and various social figures attended the dance concert. Ambassador of Spain Manuel Durán Giménez-Rico said that Flamenco has been an art for many years and has been our cultural dance. We hope you all enjoy our cultural dance, he said. He said that this is our first

event in the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi. Arts Council Karachi is the best place for such a cultural program, he said. He said that we hope that this collaboration between us will continue in the future. At the Event, the Spanish cultural dance Flamenco's expert dancers Compania Choni and Victor Bravo's brilliant dance received a standing ovation from

the audience, while the Spanish musicians David Bastidas & Juan Manuel performed at the Flamingo Dance Concert. It should be noted that the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi is an institution that takes steps the promotion of Pakistani culture and also promotes foreign culture by collaborating with other foreign consulates in Pakistan.



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National Days and Armed Forces Days

- MAY**
- May 03 / **Poland** National Day
 - May 06 / **Bulgaria** Armed Forces Day
 - May 06 / **UAE** Armed Forces Day
 - May 07 / **Kazakhstan** Armed Forces Day
 - May 08 / **Czech Republic** National Day
 - May 09 / **European Union** National Day
 - May 17 / **Norway** Constitution Day
 - May 21 / **Hungary** Armed Forces Day
 - May 22 / **Yemen Republic** Re-unification Day (National Day)
 - May 24 / **Eritrea** National Day
 - May 25 / **Lebanon** Liberation and Resistance Day
 - May 25 / **Argentina** National Day
 - May 25 / **Jordan** Independence Day
 - May 28 / **Azerbaijan** Republic Day
 - May 28 / **Ethiopia** National Day
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- Emergency Ambulance.....1122
- Motorway Police.....9266044
- Motorway Police.....9270601-20
- Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
- Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



Enquiry

- Edhi Ambulance.....115
- PIA Flight Info.....114
- PIA Cargo.....9280979
- Railway Inquiry.....117
- Railway Exchange 9270831-5
- WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
- CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

- CMH.....5611111
- MH.....5611116
- Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
- DHQ.....5556311-4
- RGH.....9290301-7
- Holy Family.....9290322-7
- PIMS.....9261170-79
- Polyclinic.....9218300-09
- Shifa International.....4603666



Departments

- CDA.....9221334-43
- CDA.....9208301-04
- Met Office.....9250360-6
- RDA.....5555864
- TMA.....5770886
- Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan

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Launching of awareness campaign against TIP, SOM

Funded by the Government of Canada through Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Country Officer Pakistan (COPAK) in collaboration with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) launched today, an awareness raising campaign on the risks and challenges of Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) in Pakistan. It targets relevant stakeholders including law enforcement, media, academia, civil society organizations, non-government organizations (NGOs) and relevant government departments and the public in general, to strengthen in-country Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and Smuggling of Migrants (SOM) prevention and response capacity. The campaign is being implemented with the financial support of the Government of Canada through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). It will include publishing and distributing awareness brochures and pamphlets, streamers, banners, airing of public service messages on radio and social media accounts as well as mobile Short Messaging Service (SMS) to increase awareness of risks, issues, and challenges related to TIP and SOM.

While talking to the participants, Dr. Jeremy Milsom, UNODC Representative, Pakistan, commented, "According to UNODC's 2020 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, Criminals trafficking children target victims from extremely poor households, dysfunctional families, or those who are abandoned with no parental care. In low-income countries, children make up half of the victims detected and are mainly trafficked for forced labor (46 percent). In higher-income countries, trafficking crimes against children may also be for sexual exploitation, forced criminality or begging. Mr. Ashraf Zubair Siddiqui, Additional Director General, Immigration FIA wel-



comed the dignitaries and said "The Government of Pakistan is acutely aware and stands fully committed to its international obligations to combat these inhuman and terrible crimes. FIA, as the lead agency against these crimes, has developed and maintained excellent relations with its international partners in general and UNODC in specific which is an abundant demonstration of our commitment. The FIA is grateful in receiving the support from UNODC to capacity building of agency in serious organized crime such as human trafficking and migrant smuggling, in policy and legislative reforms, trainings, equipment, research and development and international cooperation." He further added, "FIA and UNODC hold a solid and long history of cooperation in the fight against TIP and SOM. In 2018, together

with UNODC two laws on TIP and SOM were passed by the parliament followed by the approval of implementing rules in early 2021. The National Action Plan to combat TIP and SOM (2021-2025) was also drafted with the support of UNODC, which provides a clear guideline of what steps we must take during the next five years. "The awareness campaign launched today will help to protect the most vulnerable from being preyed upon by human traffickers and migrant smugglers. This campaign will help ensure that information reaches those in most need and enable civil society, policymakers, government officials to work together to help prevent and respond to these crimes. Canada will continue to work alongside our partners, such as the Government of Pakistan, the UNODC, in fighting trafficking and smuggling operations. These efforts will also support

safe migration, and increasing awareness is a critical component of that.", Mr. Matthew Ciavaglia Representative Canadian High Commission to Pakistan. The campaign will be implemented nationwide in close partnership with the FIA and other relevant stakeholders. Civil Society will be a key partner in this process as UNODC understands that the government and civil society must work in close partnership to fight human trafficking and migrant smuggling. The way to succeed in this fight is through a joint effort to raise awareness of these crimes among a much broader mass of relevant stakeholders. This campaign is important as it combines both prevention and protection strategies, which will support civil society organizations in their efforts to help potential victims of trafficking and vulnerable migrants.

All Chinese enterprises operating in Gwadar as normal

ISLAMABAD: China Overseas Ports Holding Company Pakistan (Pvt.) Ltd. vehemently rejected baseless news and propaganda circulating on social media regarding the closure of Chinese businesses in Gwadar, Balochistan. COPHC stated that all Chinese enterprises were operational as normal, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday. Earlier, some propagandists spread false news on social media that Chinese investors started withdrawing their money and major companies like HK Sons have been closed down. COPHC responded in a Twitter post and said "We condemn baseless news and misinformation propaganda circulating on social media networks regarding the closure of HK Sons. - DNA

NEPRA grants 8,417 net-metering licences in Fiscal Year 2020-21

ISLAMABAD: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) granted 8,417 Net-Metering Licences with accumulated capacity of around 146MW during last fiscal year 2020-21. Sources told APP here on Tuesday the total installed capacity of net-metering consumers had reached around 232MW till 30, 03, 2021. DISCOs, however, view growing trend for net-metering and other DGs a threat for their consumer base. - APP

French Revolution a watershed in history of struggle for rights

NIHCR Webinar on DISCOURSE OF HISTORY on European History from Antiquity to Modernity XII

DNA

ISLAMABAD, May 17: The French Revolution was a watershed event in modern European history that began in 1789 and ended in the late 1790s with the ascent of Napoleon Bonaparte, said Prof. Emeritus Aslam Syed on Tuesday. Prof. Emeritus Aslam Syed has been serving the Centre for Religious Studies, Ruhr Universität, Bochum, Germany. He remained Chairman, Department of History, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad and served the NIHCR as its Director. During the revolution period, French citizens razed and redesigned their country's political landscape, uprooting centuries-old institutions such as absolute monarchy and the feudal system, the guest speaker said at a Webinar on Discourse of History on European History from

Antiquity to Modernity XII here. The Webinar arranged online by the National Institute of Historical and Cultural Research (NIHCR), Centre of Excellence, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, was attended by many participants from all across the world ranging from students, teachers and researchers to have greater insights into the valuable views of the guest speaker. It was the 46th consecutive session on the Discourse of History, a brainchild of the NIHCR Director Dr Sajid Mahmood Awan. Responding to a question, Prof Syed said that in 1789, France was a powerful monarchy, and its society was divided into three unequal groups: the nobility, the clergy and the 'third state'. The 'third state' formed the majority who were often mistreated and paid more and more taxes, he said. Replying a question, Prof Syed said crises affected the country, prices

rose sharply and the poorest did not have enough to eat. In the face of these injustices, demonstrations and riots broke out across France, he said. Prof Syed recalled that on 14th July the revolution started when an angry crowd attacked the Bastille prison in Paris; the nobility and the clergy abandoned their privileges. In 1792, the monarchy was abolished and replaced by the republic. It was also when one of the symbols of the French Republic, the blue-white-and red flag, appeared, he said. Responding to a question, Prof Syed observed that although it failed to achieve all its goals and at times degenerated into a chaotic bloodbath, the French Revolution played a critical role in shaping modern France by showing the world the power inherent in the will of the people.

Adventure foundation elects office bearers

Election to the Board of AFP were generally held during its Annual General Body Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Adventure Foundation Pakistan (AFP) held 14th May, 2022. The following office bearers of the AFP Board were elected by a simple majority of votes. a). Mr. Ali Hasan Habib - President b). Syed Abu Ahmad Akif, Vice President Mr. Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Vice President Col. Syed Abbas Hussain, Vice President c). Ms. Jehan Ara Mueen, General Secretary cum Treasurer d). i) Bial Mustafa Syed - Executive Member of the Council ii) Lt. Col Dr Usman Rathore, Executive Member of the Council iii) Lt. Col (R) Mushtaq Ahmed, Executive Member of the Council. - DNA

Buner's stone industry may attract Chinese investors

DNA

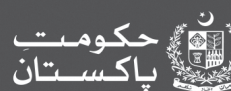
ISLAMABAD: While China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has opened new horizons for industrial investment between the two countries, the marble and granite sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has great potential to attract Chinese and other foreign investors, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. One such opportunity for the local and non-local investors is Buner Marble City (BMC). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC) is developing BMC at Bampokha areas of Buner district which is spread at about 126.4 acres. KPEZDMC has started accepting online applications for the acquisition of plots from the investors. BMC, which is set to be Buner's first economic enterprise, will add value to the district's natural resources, especially the stone industry. The zone will attract new businesses by providing an integrated infrastructure as well as a business friendly environment for sustainable industrial revolution.

عوام سب جانتے ہیں اپنے مجرم پہ جانتے ہیں

گیس کی قیمتیں (4 مہینے)	تیل کی قیمتیں (25)	گھی کی قیمتیں (470)	بجلی کی قیمتیں (90)	آٹا کی قیمتیں (1100)	نارنگی کی قیمتیں (15%)	مہنگائی (13%)	قومی ترسیل کی رفتار (6.1%)	ڈالر (189)
600	11	151	53	700	2.3%	3.9%	4%	116
2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022

4 سال میں عزت کی کمی	نوش 95 لاکھ	42,745	9.2%	43	5,600	1918
117	60	24,953	11.1%	30.9	2,260	1380
2022	2018	2022	2018	2022	2018	2022

* Data Source: PBS, SBP, Ministry of Finance, ADB, Transparency International



انشاء اللہ! بدلاتھا، بدلیں گے بد حال کو خوش حالی میں

Briefs

Air pollutants' ratio show slight uptick

ISLAMABAD: The air quality of the federal capital on Tuesday was reported healthy whereas a slight uptick was witnessed in the air pollutants ratio that remained below permissible limits due to less vehicular traffic on roads after sizzling heat turned the weather dry and hot.

The air quality data has been collected by Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) that monitors air pollutants ratio for 24 hours based on three intervals of eight hours data collection from different locations. The Pak-EPA data revealed that the air quality throughout the three intervals of data monitoring remained low as the pollutants were less than the permissible limits of national environmental quality standards (NEQS). The hazardous air pollutant particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM_{2.5}), which was a lethal atmospheric contaminant, remained 29.46 micro grammes per cubic meter on average which is below the NEQS of 35 microgrammes per cubic meter and denotes the air quality healthy. The PM_{2.5} is generated through combustion of an engine, industrial emissions, burning garbage or inflammable material and dust blown up by fast moving cars plying on non-cemented patches of the roads. However, a spike was witnessed during the peak hours that was mainly due to congestion of automobiles plying on the roads after schools vans, office buses and public cars caused congestion on the main thoroughfares, an official of EPA told APP.

Parents asked to ensure protecting children from heat-illness

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on Tuesday advised the parents and teachers to ensure taking special preventive measures to protect children from heat-related illness in the prevailing high temperature. According to them, parents and teachers must have measures in place to prepare for and manage the risks associated with extreme hot weather as the children and young people are more susceptible to heat stress. Health expert, Dr Wasim Khawaj said that the heat-related illness included conditions based on the severity of a child's condition like heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat stroke, etc.

He added, the symptoms of heat illness included heavy sweating, cold, pale or clammy skin, fast or weak pulse, nausea or vomiting, muscle cramps, tiredness or weakness, dizziness and headache. Medical expert, Dr Sharif Astori said that the heat stress can be induced by high temperatures, heavy workloads and clothing inappropriate for heat and humidity. He said that the heat stroke is the most serious heat-related illness. It occurs when the body becomes unable to control its temperature, the body temperature rises rapidly, the sweating mechanism fails and the body is unable to cool down. - APP

IRSA releases 200079 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Tuesday released 200079 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 193263 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1413.20 feet, which was 21.02 feet higher than its dead level 1392 feet.

Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 95700 and 100000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1086.35 feet, which was 36.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded 35649 and 32265 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 98355, 97109 and 37890 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River, a total of 32600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 35214 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Diplomats women take keen interest in painting exhibition of Jordanian artist Suzan organized by IFWA. - DNA

MCI to amend firefighting rules for commercial buildings

President, ICCI briefed the Director, Emergency & Disaster Management about the difficulties being faced by the business community in implementing the new firefighting requirements of MCI in industrial and commercial buildings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) has shown readiness to amend the firefighting rules for commercial and industrial buildings in Islamabad to facilitate the business community. This consensus was developed during a meeting of Syed Kashif Shah, Director, Emergency & Disaster Management, MCI with the business community at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed the Director, Emergency & Disaster Management about the difficulties being faced by the business community in implementing the new firefighting requirements of MCI in industrial and commercial buildings. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Chairman Founder Group, Tariq Sadiq, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Baser Daud, Sanaullah Khan, Muhammad Naveed Malik, Khalid Chaudhry, Mian Waqas Masud, Zikria Zia, Muhammad Ali Mirza, Umair Khattak, Ashfaq Chatha, Tahir Ayub and others were present at the occasion.



Muhammad Shakeel Munir said that it was not possible to implement the new firefighting requirements of MCI in the existing industrial and commercial buildings due to which completion certificates of many such buildings were lying pending in CDA. He proposed that a Committee comprising representatives of ICCI and MCI should be formed to review and amend the building codes and firefighting requirements of MCI

to make them implementable in the existing industrial and commercial buildings. Syed Kashif Shah, Director, Emergency & Disaster Management, MCI agreed with the proposal of President ICCI for the constitution of the Committee. He said that the Committee should develop proposals for amendment in the firefighting requirements that would be presented to the CDA Board for consideration and approval.

Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh Senior Vice President, Muhammad Faheem Khan Vice President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Chairman Founder Group and others also highlighted the issues being faced by the business community on account of new firefighting rules of MCI and thanked the Director Emergency & Disaster Management, MCI for agreeing to amend these tough rules to make them affordable and implementable for them.

Expedited efforts necessary to devise strategy against heatwave: Sherry Rehman

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman on Tuesday said it was necessary to expedite the government efforts to devise a comprehensive communication strategy and precautionary mitigating measures to tackle the menace of soaring heatwave.

The minister chaired a meeting of the Task Force on Climate Change held in pursuance of the Prime Minister's directive on May 16, 2022 at the PM house, said a news release.

The meeting was convened to take stock of immediate preparedness and response measures, prepare an action plan on precautionary measures, prepare a comprehensive public communication strategy and take



cognizance of water shortages in agriculture and other sectors.

"Our country is already water-stressed, and lack of water may lead us to water scarcity by 2025. PM's task force on Climate Change will endeavor to present immediate, midterm and long term measures by cooperating with provinces," Sherry Rehman said.

While chairing the meeting, she emphasized that "Paki-

stan is currently faced with the warmest months on record since 1961 and the Meteorological Office has predicted that the heat wave will continue till June."

One of the most significant decisions taken in the meeting was establishing central control rooms located in the NDMA to ensure effective coordination with all emergency response units in order to expedite flow of information regarding heatwave. In the same vein, the Task Force directed the provincial governments to provide information on the number of emergency response centers within each province so that Ministry of Climate Change can proactively disseminate that information to the general public. - APP

Mobile import surge 7% in 10 months

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones has witnessed an increase of 7.43 percent during the ten months of the fiscal year (2021-22) as compared to the corresponding period of last year. Pakistan imported mobile phones worth the US \$1810.234 million during July-April (2021-22) as compared to the imports of US \$1684.988 million during July-April (2020-21), showing growth of 7.43 percent, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Meanwhile on a year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones also witnessed an increase of 43.56 percent during the month of April 2022 as compared to the same month of last year. The import of mobile phones during April 2022 was recorded at \$213.895 million against the exports of \$148.992 million in April 2021. - APP

Revolutionary steps taken in last three years: IT Minister

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque said that revolutionary steps have been taken in information technology and telecommunication sector in last three years in Pakistan. In his message on the occasion of 'World Telecommunication and Information Society Day', Federal Minister for IT said that the foreign direct investment in telecommunication industry remained 6.1 billion dollars from 1st July 2018 to 30 March, 2022. The number of active mobile SIMs reached 193 million by March 2022 due to reforms in telecom sector, and mobile and fixed Broadband consumers' number saw 39.4 percent increase, he said.

IT Minister Syed Amin Ul Haque said that projects were started through Universal Service Fund (USF), the attached department of Ministry of IT & Telecom, for the provision of broadband services across the country. Over 37 projects of worth Rs 31 billion were launched by June 2021, and upto 50 to 75 percent work has been completed on most of these projects, he added.

The Federal Minister said that Rs 6.47 billion are being spent on nine different projects of optical fiber and broadband services in Punjab, and nine projects of worth over Rs 8.48 billion are also underway in Sindh for provision of high speed internet and laying of fiber optical in the province. - DNA

Exports increase in 10 months

ISLAMABAD: The exports of the country in rupee term witnessed an increase of 35.52 per cent during the first ten months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. According to PBS provisional figures, exports during July-April (2021 - 2022) were recorded at Rs. 4,553,272 million as against Rs. 3,359,742 million during the corresponding period of last year showing an increase of 35.52%, according to provisional data released by PBS. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports during the month of April 2022 increased by 57.44 percent when compared to the exports of same month of last year. The exports in April 2020 were recorded at Rs.534,514 million compared to exports of Rs.339,498 million during April, 2021.

On month-on-month basis, the exports increased by 7.15 when compared to the exports of Rs.498,845 million in March 2022. The main commodities of exports during April, 2022 were knitwear (Rs. 90,096 million), readymade garments (Rs. 64,669 million), bed wear (Rs. 51,398 million), cotton cloth (Rs. 38,763 million), rice others (Rs.32,704 million), towels (Rs.19,974 million), cotton yarn (Rs.18,016 million), madeup articles, excluding towels & Bedwear (Rs.15,277 million), rice basmati (Rs.15,198 million) and surgical goods & medical instruments (Rs.8,067 million). - APP

PMD: Day temperatures to be slightly increased till Friday

ISLAMABAD: The day temperatures will be slightly increased from Wednesday till Friday in most parts of the country, according to the weather experts, compelling the citizens to take precautionary measures, stay indoors at peak hours and avoid unnecessary visits outside. However, the temperatures will be normalized in most parts of the country including upper Punjab, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan from Friday onwards for few days in result of the dust storm, wind and cloudiness. The reason for the early heat wave is the impact of climatic changes throughout the world as per the weather experts however it requires extra precautions by the citizens. Talking to APP, Spokesperson, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), Dr. Zaheer Ahmad Babar said the day temperatures will slightly increase in most parts of the country especially the plain areas of Sindh, Southern Punjab, Southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan till Friday. However the temperatures will be normalized after Friday with chances of light rain along with gusty winds and dust storm in upper Punjab upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan which would bring relief to the heat stricken people during the next week, he said. - APP

ANF seizes over 1677 kg drugs in 34 operations; arrests 28

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) Pakistan has seized 1677.791 kg drugs, 990 liters Acetic Anhydride Chemical and 1965.82 kg suspected material worth US\$ 137.540 million internationally, arrested 28 persons including two women, a foreigner and impounded eight vehicles while conducting 34 counter narcotics operations throughout the country. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, the seized drugs comprised 185.975 kg Heroin, 1407.876 kg Hashish, 48.800 kg Opium, 25 kg Morphine, 2.260 kg Amphetamine, 5.200 kg Methamphetamine (Ice), 6060 Diazepam Valium Tablets (2.680 Kg), 60850 Clonazepam tablets (8.850 kg), 20000 Aximax tablets (3.720 kg), 750 kg poppy seed and 1203.25 kg suspected material. ANF Balochistan recovered 1340.2 kg drugs, 990 liters Acetic Anhydride Chemical, 750 kg poppy seed, 1200 kg suspected material in 6 operations while arrested an accused and seized two vehicles. - APP

Air University organizes conference on Physics

Dr. Mozaffar Hussain, Chairman Department of Physics, said that the conference's keynote talk would be focused on contemporary needs on physics research

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Air University, has organized 2nd 'Two Days International Conference on Physics', during which renowned scholars and professors from Canada, Italy, Sweden, Australia, China, Iraq and other international countries expressed their views with a focus on renewable energy sources, nano-technology, magnetic, thermoelectric and ferroelectric materials. Theoretical, modelling, simulation and medical applications of Physics. The conference's keynote talk, according to the organizer Dr. Mozaffar Hussain, Chair of the ICP 2022 and Chair Department of Physics, focused on contemporary needs on physics research.

Renowned scientist Dr. Samar Mubarakmand, who was the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony, lauded the Air University's initiative to organise the international conference providing a remarkable opportunity of knowledge sharing among scholars in the fields of Physics. Sharing his life experiences with participants, he said that knowledge



of Physics is essential to every field; may it be education, healthcare or defense. In his address, he further said that Pakistan has immense reserves of a large number of

minerals and natural resources that include coal, gold, copper, chromites, iron ore, and many others. "However, 95percent of minerals are still unexplored in Pakistan," he

stated, while urging the need to give due importance to the mining industry for boosting the national economy.

Earlier, Vice Chancellor Air University Air Marshal (Retd) Javid Ahmed, in his welcoming address, acknowledged the contributions of the Department of Physics for promoting the research culture. While calling the Chief Guest Dr. Mubarakmand a national icon, he said that: "We are honoured to have such a legendary and veteran scientist among us." According to him, there is much to learn from his outstanding achievements, professionally as well as leadership qualities. "We are highly grateful for his contributions for making the defence of our beloved homeland unconquerable," the VC said. The Vice Chancellor, while urging students to explore new avenues in the context of the digital era, has advised that Physics opens doors to most exciting, cutting-edge, rewarding career opportunities across the globe. According to him, one of the major lessons Air University learned during the pandemic Covid-19 is the importance of online education and distance learning.

A major verdict

The Supreme Court, in a major decision, on Tuesday issued the verdict that the dissident members of a parliamentary party cannot cast votes against their party's directives. The court, issuing its verdict on the presidential reference seeking the interpretation of Article 63(A) of the constitution, said that the article concerned cannot be interpreted alone.

Earlier, the Supreme Court wrapped up the hearing of reference filed by President Arif Alvi. The reference was filed in the apex court in March after the Opposition parties submitted a no-trust motion against the then prime minister Imran Khan.

A five-member bench headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial and comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail heard the case.

The PTI government had approached the SC in a bid to stop its dissenting lawmakers from voting against Imran Khan and had sought a lifetime disqualification for those who attempted to deviate from the party's direction.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) reserved its verdict on a reference seeking the disqualification of 25 dissident MPAs of the PTI, who had voted for PML-N's Hamza Shehbaz in the election for the Punjab chief minister.

It will announce the verdict at 12pm today (Wednesday). Last month, Hamza was elected Punjab chief minister, defeating PTI-PML-Q's joint candidate, Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. Hamza had bagged 197 votes, including 25 from PTI dissidents. Elahi did not get any votes as the PTI and PML-Q lawmakers had walked out of the session. Subsequently, after a declaration by the PTI, Elahi, who is also the Punjab Assembly speaker, had sent a reference against the dissident MPAs to the ECP, urging it to de-seat these lawmakers for defecting from the PTI by casting their votes in Hamza's favour in violation of party directions.

These two major decisions will determine the future of parliamentary politics in Pakistan. It is a welcome decision by the top court to discourage the disloyalty of party ticket holders. Now it is up to the Election Commission to give a verdict that could benefit the parliamentary system in the future.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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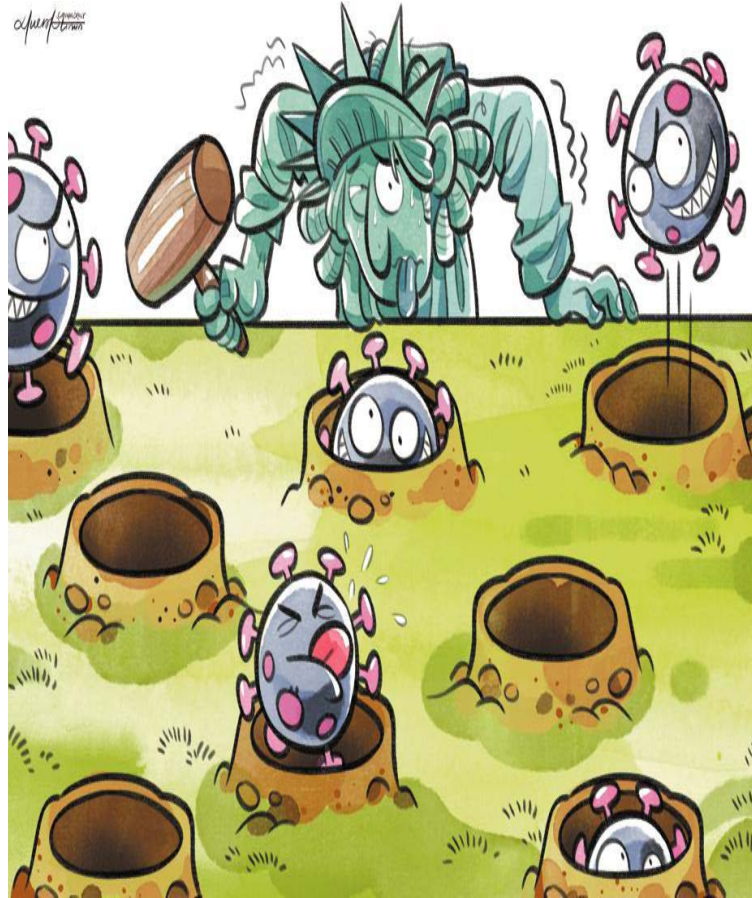
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Buffalo shooting a racist, deprave act

It is hard to contemplate the level of depravity that caused a teenager to drive more than 270 kilometres from his home to Buffalo in upstate New York and open fire on innocent victims in a shopping plaza and store.

That the 18-year-old did so and live-streamed the event while purposely and wilfully targeting black victims speaks to the sheer evil motivating this attack. Before embarking on this act of barbarity, the gunman allegedly posted a white supremacist diatribe supposedly excusing and explaining the reasons behind his murderous rampage.

Let's be clear: There is nothing on this Earth that could justify such an act of evil. Regardless of colour or creed, we are all equal – and to be targeted for execution simply because of the colour of skin is hate of the utmost and vilest kind.

That such hate can fester speaks to the failure of social media companies to be responsible for the content posted on their sites. By failing to act, they allow these sick groups and individuals to spread their venom and hate. And web-hosting companies that allow white supremacist or other extremist groups to post and host their sites also speaks to the ultimate failure of companies, telecoms and governments at local, state and federal level to deal with a phenomenon that has existed since the World Wide Web came into existence.

But this is also another sign of American society's failure to come to grips with its love affair with guns. In few other societies are gun laws so lax, few other societies have to deal with mass shootings that occurred with such frequency. While some states and the federal government struggle to take piecemeal steps toward proper gun control, there is a large body of thought and support that simply believes that it is normal to be able to be armed to the teeth.

This shooting is also an indicator that the American psyche is deeply divided still when it comes to the issue of race. That a segment of society can be targeted based solely on the colour of skin is testament to the deep divide that exists now in America.

For a nation that is built on the principle of equality for all, it remains fractured. Over recent years, the prolific growth of extreme views have only heightened the tensions that lie beneath. And hate groups thrive when their views are perceived as becoming more mainstream, as if that in itself somehow gives individuals the right to choose who lives and dies by their acts of evil and senseless violence.

Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, a statesman, friend of Pakistan and leader of humanitarian philanthropy

Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi



In 2005, when a very strong earthquake jolted Pakistan, the UAE under the directives of Sheikh Khalifa, took the initiative to send relief items, aid, and rescue and relief teams to the earthquake victims and injured, in addition to appropriating \$100 million to provide urgent relief aid and to establish housing for thousands of victims affected by the earthquake

We feel the pain and sadness on the demise of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, whom pure soul departed to almighty Allah after a busy and distinguished leadership, guidance, benevolence and giving.

The sorrow and sadness was felt on all faces, pain squeezed all hearts, and all homes were devastated by the passing away of H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, which expresses with all sincerity the unity of blood, history and a common destiny. We have all lost an exceptional leader who came in difficult times, and he passed it with success, ability, wisdom and patience, to make way for us and paved it broad that we could walk on it with full strength

and confidence through time. We lost a seasoned leader and a righteous son, who united and did not separate, who built and did not destroy, who preserved and did not abandon, who brought everyone together on the path of goodness and construction, a man who combined the art of leadership and the ability to guide with simplicity, humbleness and humanity, that's why he was close to everyone's hearts.

The sad demise of H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan is a great loss for the world of peace, tolerance and human giving. It grieved our world with the forfeiture of this leading figure who sought throughout his life to promote peace, stability and security in all parts of the world, to avoid wars and every tribulation, and to spread the values of brotherhood and tolerance among all, as there were no limits to his humanitarian and charitable giving.

During his rule, the UAE-Pakistan relations witnessed dynamic leaps of partnership between the two countries, and the late Sheikh Khalifa, "may Allah rest his soul in eternal peace" had a special affection in his heart for the people of Pakistan, and im-

mentally cared for the interest of the Pakistani community residing in the Emirates, and the people of Pakistan respectfully exchanged this love for him. This great leader holds a great and deep place in the hearts of Pakistanis.

Sheikh Khalifa was known to practice a number of hobbies, including falconry, and Pakistan was his favorite destination for practicing this hobby, as this was reflected in his many attentions, especially through his support for a number of environmental projects, including falcon and Houbara bustard breeding and releasing programs and bustards, especially in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

From the east of the earth to its west, the humanitarian approaches of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al



H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan

Nahyan will be memorialized in history, especially in Pakistan which witnessed during his rule an increase in the humanitarian, charitable and development work provided by the UAE to assist the brothers in Pakistan.

The UAE-Pakistan Assistance Program (UAEPAP) which was launched in 2011 with the aim of help the Pakistani people in facing the effects of the devastating floods in 2010, is a qualitative leap on the path to assist development and stability in Pakistan under the guidance and support of the late father, especially since the program adopted a comprehensive development approach.

In January 2019, the administration of UAE-Pakistan Assistance Program, and within the framework of the third phase of the project, commenced implementing 40 development and humanitarian projects in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan with a cost of \$200 million financed by the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development.

The implementation of the third phase projects came as a continuation of the projects implemented by the UAE-Pakistan Assistance Program during the first and second phases in many Pakistani provinces and regions during the period from 2011 to 2017, which totaled in 165 projects at a total cost of about \$420 million.

The third phase project included five main areas: roads, bridges, education, health, water supply and

agriculture sector, in addition to providing many humanitarian aids including distribution of food to the needy and displaced populations, and implementing polio vaccination campaigns.

In implementation of the directives of the late H.H. Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the then President of UAE, the Emirates Polio Vaccination Campaign, which was carried out in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan during the period from 2014 to the end of last September, provided 418,956,226 doses of polio vaccines for more than 71 million Pakistani children under the age of five years.

In 2005, when a very strong earthquake jolted Pakistan, the UAE under the directives of Sheikh Khalifa, took the initiative to send relief items, aid, and rescue and relief teams to the earthquake victims and injured, in addition to appropriating \$100 million to provide urgent relief aid and to establish housing for thousands of victims affected by the earthquake.

Sheikh Khalifa also ordered the establishment of field hospitals in the areas that were affected by the earthquake in order to provide urgent medical assistance and provide medicine and treatment for the injured and wounded, in addition to the participation of the UAE search and rescue team to assist in rescue and recovery operations in the most affected areas that the rescue teams have not yet reached.

In conclusion, we thank the good emotions of the Pakistani people and officials and their sincere condolences towards the leader of the UAE. We highly appreciate the declaration of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan of national mourning, and flying the flags at half-mast for three days in mourning for the late His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE "may Allah have mercy on him".

And the UAE will remain in the footsteps of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, "may Allah bless his soul" in the era of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan "may Allah protect him", who was elected unanimously by the rulers of UAE states as President of UAE to accomplish the journey of progress, elevation and prosperity, and to strengthen of well-established relations with Pakistan and other countries to achieve the hopes and aspirations of the peoples of the world for good and development.

Why Türkiye opposes Sweden and Finland's NATO bids

Omer Ozkizilcik

In December 2021, Linde had met with Ahmad, the co-chair of the Syrian Democratic Council, in Stockholm. In total disregard for the global fight against terrorism, Linde tweeted out a photo of her meeting with him, signalling that Sweden will remain an active partner of the YPG. This is in spite of visual proof depicting Elham in the traditional guerilla uniform posing with other PKK members in front of a picture of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK terror group, in an academy in the Qandil Mountains

The war in Ukraine has made Finland and Sweden jittery as the security threat coming from their eastern neighbour Russia has become all too real. Both nations have now turned to NATO, seeking formal membership in the alliance. But any European country aspiring to become a part of NATO must abide by international law and ethics. Unfortunately, both Sweden and Finland fall short of that requirement. For any democratic state, combatting terrorism has almost always been an indispensable security

priority. And alliances built by democratic partners are based on mutual trust and respect for territorial integrity. But Sweden and Finland have breached international norms by providing sanctuary to the PKK and its affiliates. The PKK is considered to be a terrorist organisation not only by NATO members but also by Finland and Sweden. Since 1984, the PKK has carried out numerous terror attacks in Türkiye, killing at least 40,000 Turkish civilians, including women and children. The group espouses a Marxist-Leninist separatist ideology, attempts to alienate Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin and believes in achieving its goals by terrorising the state and civilians. Therefore, no one should act surprised as to why Ankara has been opposing Sweden and Finland's NATO membership bid. A friend of an enemy cannot be your friend. Stockholm and Helsinki's support to the YPG, a Syrian offshoot of the PKK, directly threatens Türkiye's national security and undermines the rules-based international order. Sweden has contributed at least \$376 million to the YPG and hosted an official representative of the so-called Syrian Democratic Council – the political umbrella of the YPG-dominated SDF unit. In a virtual meeting with one of the YPG's ringleaders Elham Ahmad in 2020, Sweden's foreign affairs minister Ann Linde voiced support for the inclusion of the YPG in the UN-sponsored constitutional committee. In December 2021, Linde had met with Ahmad, the co-chair of the Syrian Democratic Council, in Stock-

holm. In total disregard for the global fight against terrorism, Linde tweeted out a photo of her meeting with him, signalling that Sweden will remain an active partner of the YPG. This is in spite of visual proof depicting Elham in the traditional guerilla uniform posing with other PKK members in front of a picture of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK terror group, in an academy in the Qandil Mountains. Finland hasn't been any different. Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto has also hosted Ahmad in Helsinki.

In late 2020, a Finnish delegation headed by Ambassador José Tanner, Finland's envoy to the United Nations and special envoy to Syria, visited YPG-held areas and had an official meeting with the SDF. During the meeting, Tanner praised the terror group for representing "democracy, pluralism, and respect for women's rights" in the Middle East while advocating for its expansion in the region.

As a NATO member, Türkiye has repeatedly asked Sweden, Finland and other European and global powers to course-correct their positions vis-a-vis the PKK and its affiliates and desist from undermining Ankara's efforts to fight terrorism emanating from their ranks.

To become NATO members and work with Türkiye, which has the second-largest army in the alliance, Sweden and Finland will have to prove their worth and assure Ankara that they will stop assisting the YPG and their likes.

Although the two nations have made several statements to win Ankara's support for their membership bid, the Turkish government wasn't convinced. According to the NATO charter, an attack on any NATO member will be seen as an attack on the entire NATO and prompt a joint counterattack against the foe. As Russia has repeatedly threatened Finland and Sweden over their intent to join NATO, it would expose Türkiye to a severe geopolitical risk should it allow the two countries to enter the alliance.

So far, Finland and Sweden have failed to justify their

support for the YPG. They have resorted to weak reasoning that the YPG is a "different" entity that has no relations with the PKK. The argument has no legs since the links between the YPG and the PKK are well established and even accepted by US officials.

Russia and the US have used the same argument to engage with the PKK and its allies. Russia has been providing military support and protection to the YPG, as does the US. In addition, France, Sweden, and Finland have also developed a working relationship with the YPG. This dynamic has put a massive strain on Türkiye's relations with some NATO members.

Therefore, Türkiye has signalled that it will not shy away from using its veto right to convince Sweden and Finland to come down heavily on the YPG.

Ankara has not forgotten its experience of letting Greece rejoin NATO. At the time in the 1980s, the government of Kenan Evren in Türkiye, which was installed through a military coup, allowed Greece to re-join NATO after the country had briefly walked out of the alliance.

However, later on, all of the promises made to Ankara were forgotten and Greece exploited – still exploits – its NATO membership for its maximalist demands against Türkiye. This experience will be fresh on Ankara's mind as it demands serious guarantees from Sweden and Finland before accepting them as NATO partners.

For both Sweden and Finland, chickens have come home to roost. The two Scandinavian countries have begun to face the pinch of supporting a terror group. They now face the prospect of losing NATO's protection and dealing with an existential security threat from Moscow.

To ease Türkiye's concerns, initial steps should include the cessation of all aid to PKK, YPG and their proxies; turning the budget for YPG into aid for Syrian civilians in northwest Syria; shutting down all PKK-affiliated networks; repatriating wanted persons to Türkiye, and ending the arms embargo on Türkiye.

Courtesy: TRT World

Briefs

Dissident...

FROM PAGE 01

declined from issuing a verdict and said that since it was a constitutional issue under Article 63-A, therefore, the Parliament should look into the issue. A five-member larger bench, headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, comprising Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, announced the decision on Tuesday evening. According to the decision, dissident lawmakers were not allowed to vote against party line in four instances including the election of prime minister and chief minister; a vote of confidence or no-confidence; a Constitution amendment bill; and a money bill outlined under Article 63-A. "The first question referred by the President relates to the proper approach to be taken to the interpretation and application of Article 63A of the Constitution.

ECP...

FROM PAGE 01

members of the provincial assembly argued that the MPAs were unaware of the directions given by the parliamentary party about voting for Pervaiz Elahi for the slot of Punjab chief minister. However, counsel for PTI, Syed Ali Zafar, argued that the MPAs argument reminded him of what "we call the sleepwalking defence". The counsel added that, "Lawyers of yesteryears were men of great sagacity and wisdom. In my initial days of practice, I used to make it a point to visit them to learn. At one such meeting, with one of the most famous criminal lawyers of the time, I asked him what was the worst and most absurd defence he had ever taken in his cases," the counsel added.

Forces kill...

FROM PAGE 01

commander Rasheed alias Jabir and Abdul Salam alias Chamtoo by the military's media wing. They were killed during an exchange of fire with security forces. The ISPR, in a statement, said that on the night of May 16-17, these two "most wanted" terrorists involved in terrorist activities in the Boya area were killed. According to the ISPR, weapons and ammunition were also seized.

Gen Faiz in...

FROM PAGE 01

first ever interview with CNN couple of days back whereas he had said, "we have no any enmity with United States." The banned TTP sources confirmed, "presence of Gen. Faiz fore talks in Kabul." However, they avoided sharing of further details. Besides banned TTP, certain other Afghan journalists and political activists in Kabul have also confirmed arrival, presence and engagement of high ranking Pakistani delegates with banned TTP commanders through Haqqani network. Though the reports from Kabul reveal that high ranking military and intelligence agencies officials are included in Gen. Faiz Hameed led delegation. However, MNA from North Waziristan Mohsin Dawar during Assembly session on Tuesday questioned, "release and sending of two imprisoned banned TTP commanders from Swat Muslim Khan and Malik Mahmud." MNA Mohsin Dawar's remarks likely to raise stock of question on dialogues with banned TTP across the border in Afghanistan.

Sweden...

FROM PAGE 01

we will tomorrow together file the application," the Swedish prime minister told reporters in Stockholm. She added Sweden was ready to talk to NATO member Turkey about her country's membership bid and to seek to resolve any problems Ankara has over the issue. "We are seeking contact with Turkey and we are prepared to ... travel to Turkey to discuss and straighten out any question marks there may be," Andersson said.

Swedish embassy holds Youth dialogue on clean environment

Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan Henrik Persson said 'Sweden is on the track to become world's first fossil-free welfare state, reaching net zero emissions by 2045'

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: A youth dialogue on the right to clean and healthy environment was organized by Embassy of Sweden in Pakistan, UNDP, WWF-Pakistan and Stockholm+50 Youth Task Force.

According to a press release issued here on Tuesday, the dialogue engaged youth, multilateral organizations, civil society and policymakers to have a focused conversation on what such a right means in the local context. Sweden is hosting Stockholm+50, a crucial international environmental meeting on 2nd and 3rd June 2022.

The youth dialogue aimed to create more awareness amongst Pakistani youth regarding their role at a multilateral level, at the policy making tables such as the Stockholm+50 International Meeting and at the Climate Negotiations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's Conference of Parties (COPs).

Henrik Persson, Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan, welcomed the participants and said "Sweden is on the track to become world's first fossil-free welfare state, reaching net zero emissions by 2045. Stockholm+50 is an opportunity to consider what is going well, what can be improved and what we can do to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Voices of youth needs to be communicated to the leaders to drive action to achieve sustainable development. It is possible to create a better future if we act together. Sweden is open for collaboration."

Speaking on the occasion, Knut Ostby, Res-



ident Representative, UNDP Pakistan said, 'Pakistan is the fifth most populous and one of the youngest countries in the world. Currently, 68% of Pakistanis are below the age of 30, and 27% are aged between 15 and 29. The current moment presents an opportunity for young Pakistanis to drive transformative changes on ground and be ambassadors of climate action. Through increased cooperation and dialogue, the youth can help strengthen the ability of businesses and governments to deal with impacts of climate change. Youth now have the chance to advocate for a resilient and greener economy that will

lead to prosperity, new jobs, and a healthier planet.' Hammad Naqi Khan, Director General WWF-Pakistan, stated "As the largest conservation organization in Pakistan, WWF-Pakistan has been working to foster young people's connection with nature. Last year alone, we engaged with over 14,000 youth through various initiatives. At WWF, we believe that youth are both advocates and catalysts of change and thus, an essential part of decision making. Therefore, we are working with partners to not only develop young people's knowledge about sustainable development, but also

connect them to experts, businesses and government, and elevate their voices to appropriate platforms." Over 60 young people aged between 11-25 participated in the dialogues and shared their policy proposals towards the right to a healthy environment. The dialogue was moderated by Ms Saher Rashid Baig, a Pakistani member of the Stockholm+50 Youth Task and a Global youth advocate for climate, ocean, gender and human rights. The desired and concrete policy demands of the Youth Dialogue will be communicated to the Stockholm+50 Secretariat and incorporated in the policy positions of the Stockholm+50.

Acting Uzbek FM Norov meets with SCO SG

NEWS DESK

TASHKENT: Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Vladimir Norov met with the Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Zhang Ming, reports "Dunyo" IA correspondent. According to the Uzbekistan MFA, the parties discussed the state and prospects of multifaceted cooperation between Uzbekistan and the SCO.

Issues related to the preparation and holding of events under the chairmanship of Uzbekistan in the SCO were considered. The parties noted the successful holding of more than 40 events of the Organization under the chairmanship of Uzbekistan, discussed organizational issues and the agenda of high-level meetings scheduled for May-September this year.

It was emphasized that, at the initiative of Uzbekistan, new areas of cooperation within the SCO were launched, which contribute to enriching the agenda, taking into account modern realities. Thus, for the first time, ministerial meetings of the SCO member states on information and communication technologies, poverty reduction



were held. On May 17, Tashkent will host the first meeting of the heads of agencies responsible for plant quarantine. The SCO Secretary-General highly appreciated the preparations for the main event - the meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the SCO, which will be held on September 15-16 this year in Samarkand. The parties noted the need for continuing active efforts

to speed up the process of agreeing on the documents planned for signing as part of the upcoming event.

Views were exchanged on the further development of the SCO activities, increasing its authority in the international arena. Certain issues on the international and regional agenda, including the current situation in Afghanistan, were also considered.

Pakistan wins big at Red Bull Paper Wings

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani paper plane pilot Rana Muhammad Usman Saeed won the big one at the World Finals of Red Bull Paper Wings, the world's biggest paper plane throwing competition. He competed in the 'Airtime' category and ended a personal 10-year journey to the podium by winning with a time of 14.86 seconds.

Held in Salzburg, Austria, Red Bull Paper Wings showcased the best paper plane pilots from over 60 countries, competing in airtime, distance and aerobatics categories. Usman, along with Raja Sameer, qualified for the World Finals after winning the competition's Pakistan finals. Sameer could not make it to the top 15, but Usman ensured he didn't go back without the trophy. Not just the trophy

but in the pre-elimination, he had achieved 16.39 seconds - a new Red Bull Paper Wings World Final record. A lawyer by profession, Usman has competed thrice in Red Bull Paper Wings and has been a finalist every single time. The third time was the charm, though, as he finally took the trophy home in 2022. His intention was that he didn't want to go back without achieving what he wanted. "I was here in Hangar-7 in 2012, but I wasn't prepared, and I didn't make the podium," Usman said. "From that time, I really built my interest in paper planes, worked hard, and finally achieved what I wanted to do." Usman added that while leaving Pakistan, he promised that he would bring the trophy home, and so he did. - DNA



Spain, Morocco reopen borders for 1st time since pandemic

OVIEDO: The land borders separating Spain's two African enclaves from Morocco reopened for the first time in 26 months on Tuesday. The border crossing of El Tarajal was festive at the time the border opened around midnight. According to Spanish daily El Pais, people applauded and sang after the long-awaited restoration of mobility. Hundreds of people crossed the border overnight. The Spanish city of Ceuta is just over 7 square miles (18 square kilometers), while Melilla is not even 5 square miles. They both represent the only EU land borders with an African nation. Many people in the area split

their lives between Spain and Morocco. Before the beginning of the pandemic, there were an estimated 5,000 cross-border workers.

But the borders have not returned to what they once were. For now, only those with legal permission to enter the Schengen area can enter Spain. On May 31, cross-border workers will be allowed in, while a working group will continue determining the next groups of people or merchandise that will be allowed to cross the borders. The border was first closed in March 2020 due to the pandemic, but Morocco kept it closed to pressure Spain to change its position on the independence of Western Sahara.

It was exactly one year ago that Ceuta was the scene of a fierce political clash between Spain and Morocco. After Spain was caught treating the leader of the Western Sahara Polisario Front, an enemy of Morocco, for COVID-19, Moroccan guards allowed more than 10,000 migrants to flow into Ceuta on May 17, 2021. But that conflict has long subsided. Madrid has shifted and now backs Rabat's view that Western Sahara should be an autonomous region within Morocco. With the reopening of the borders, Spain has reinforced police presence in its African enclaves. - APP

Newcastle blow up Arsenal's UCL dream

SPORTS DESK

NEWCASTLE: Mikel Arteta castigated his Arsenal side for throwing away a season's work in a limp 2-0 defeat at Newcastle that looks set to see the Gunners miss out on Champions League football for a sixth successive season. Tottenham remain two points above their north London rivals in fourth place in the Premier League.

Spurs now realistically only need a draw away to already-relegated Norwich on Sunday to secure a top-four finish thanks to their superior goal difference. Arsenal's defeat also guaranteed third-place Chelsea's place in the Champions League next season. Ben White's own goal and Bruno Guimaraes' late strike was the difference between the sides. But the manner of the Newcastle performance was even more impressive as Eddie Howe's men sent a message they could be challenging for a top-four finish themselves next season. "A really difficult night to swallow," said Arteta. "Newcastle deserved to win comfortably. They were much better from the first minute, we had nothing in the game. They were much better than us in everything that a football match requires. We could not cope tonight with the game we had to play here." Arteta's men were in the driving seat with three games to go as they lead Spurs by four points. But Tottenham's 3-0 derby win on Thursday cranked up the pressure on the young

Gunners who failed to respond. "Newcastle were 10 times better than us and the performance was nowhere near what we need to play in the Champions League," added Arteta. "We weren't at the races." Only Man-

chester City and Liverpool have won more Premier League points than the Magpies in 2022 since they began to splash to wealth of the Saudi sovereign wealth fund in the transfer market. More big money signings

are expected to arrive at St James' Park in the coming months, but Arsenal's budget in the transfer market could be severely dented by again missing out on the riches of the Champions League.



Imran...

FROM PAGE 01

apex court with the verdict has ensured Pakistan's morality does not diminish. "I am thankful that the Supreme Court rejected the votes of the people who sell their vote and betray their constituents and democracy," the ex-prime minister said. But Khan did not stop there and requested the top court to hear PM Shehbaz and his family's corruption cases as the incumbent government had "destroyed" the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) - the body probing their cases. Former FIA director Dr Muhammad Rizwan passed away due to a heart attack and another official who was probing their corruption cases also suffered a heart attack, Khan said and asked the apex court to hear the cases as it was tantamount to "daylight robbery".

Ukrainian...

FROM PAGE 01

high. One man was wheeled out, his head tightly wrapped in thick bandages. While both sides spoke of a deal under which all Ukrainian troops would abandon the huge steelworks, important details were not yet public, including how many fighters still remained inside, and whether any form of prisoner swap had been agreed. Ukraine's Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Malyar told a briefing that Kyiv would not disclose how many fighters were inside the plant until all were safe. The Kremlin said President Vladimir Putin had personally guaranteed the prisoners would be treated according to international standards. "The 'Mariupol' garrison has fulfilled its combat mission," the General Staff of Ukraine's Armed Forces said in a statement. "The supreme military command ordered the commanders of the units stationed at Azovstal to save the lives of the personnel."

PTI leaders...

FROM PAGE 01

be allowed to vote and called for unseating them. In a 3:2 split decision, three judges - Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, and Justice Munib Akhtar - agreed that dissident members' votes should not be counted. But Justice Jamal Mandokhail and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal disagreed with the verdict. Responding to the verdict, former information minister and PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry said PM Shehbaz Sharif and Punjab CM Hamza Shahbaz have "lost the majority". Sweden, Finland to hand in NATO applications we will tomorrow together file the application," the Swedish prime minister told reporters in Stockholm. She added Sweden was ready to talk to NATO member Turkey about her country's membership bid and to seek to resolve any problems Ankara has over the issue. "We are seeking contact with Turkey and we are prepared to ... travel to Turkey to discuss and straighten out any question marks there may be," Andersson said.

Terror acts...

FROM PAGE 01

by high level meetings on Monday. The high ups have discussed in depth the prevailing law and order situation and exchanged views on stock of proposals aimed at ensuring protection to lives and properties of the people. In this respect, the authorities insisted on maximum focus on activities of all those religious hardliners or suspect militants. A high ranking police official, pleading not to be named has confirmed "presence, extra ordinary strengthening and activism on the part of militants, associated with IS-Daesh." All these militants returned from Syria and now are on a new task in the region. Though the police officer didn't describe in depth the "new task" assigned to IS-Daesh militants in the region it is pertained to what it called, "regrouping of militants in Afghanistan." Senior political activist and analyst Shakeel Waheed Ullah Khan has already pointed out "efforts for blocking China from the soil of Afghanistan." Such regrouping is also in dire need of manpower, which is easily available in the region.

Briefs

McDonald's to exit Russia, sell business in country

NEW YORK: American fast-food giant McDonald's said Monday it will exit Russia in the wake of the Ukraine invasion, ending a more than three-decade run begun in the hopeful period near the end of the Cold War. The restaurant chain, which launched in Moscow in January 1990 to great fanfare almost two years before the Soviet Union was dissolved, characterized the withdrawal as difficult but necessary. "The humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, and the precipitating unpredictable operating environment, have led McDonald's to conclude that continued ownership of the business in Russia is no longer tenable, nor is it consistent with McDonald's values," the company said in a statement. The chain is looking to sell "its entire portfolio of McDonald's restaurants in Russia to a local buyer." The burger giant is one of numerous foreign firms that have pulled out of the country or suspended operations following Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in late February. Earlier on Monday, French automaker Renault announced it had handed over its Russian assets to the government, marking the first major nationalization since the onset of Western sanctions against Moscow's military campaign. - APP

Harris leads US team to meet new UAE leader

ABU DHABI: US Vice President Kamala Harris on Monday led a high-level delegation to meet the United Arab Emirates' new president, who takes over after his half-brother's death, following months of strained ties between Washington and the oil-rich Gulf state. Harris, whose team included Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and CIA chief William Burns, headed the strongest delegation to visit UAE since President Joe Biden took office last year. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was chosen as president on Saturday, a day after the death of his long-ailing half-brother, former leader Sheikh Khalifa. Harris said the UAE was a "friend and partner", as she congratulated Sheikh Mohamed on his election and expressed Washington's condolences. "We are here as a delegation... to reaffirm the shared commitment we have to security and prosperity in this region, and also how the American people have benefited from this relationship in terms of security and prosperity," Harris said. World leaders have flocked to Abu Dhabi to pay their respects, demonstrating the rising prominence of the major oil exporter after the decline of some of the Middle East's traditional powers. - APP

Patriots and arias: Italian opera seeks UNESCO recognition

NAPLES: Opera originated in Italy, it was sung by Italian patriots and some of the world's greatest arias came from the peninsula. Now Rome wants credit where credit is due. Home to Scarlatti and Verdi, Italy has put in a bid for UNESCO - the UN's cultural agency - to recognise the art of Italian opera singing on its list of intangible global heritage. A decision is due at the end of the year. "Opera was born in Italy," said Stephane Lissner, the French director of the San Carlo theatre in Naples, which opened in 1737 and claims to be the oldest opera house in the world. After various experiments with musical theatre in the 16th century, opera came into being around 1600 in Florence, with the founding of an academy promoting an innovative combination of sung text and music. The first great composer of opera is considered to be Italy's Claudio Monteverdi, who lived from 1567 to 1643 - and that was just the start. "If you look at the history of opera in the 18th century, there were 400 new compositions during that century" in Naples alone, Lissner told AFP. The southern city was, at the time, the capital of a kingdom run by the Bourbons. - APP

Pak NA Speaker chairs PAECO executive council meeting

Then, Chairman of Pakistan's National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf turned the chairmanship of the PAECO to Chair of Azerbaijan's Milli Majlis Sahiba Gafarova

DNA

BAKU: The Executive Council of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Economic Co-operation Organisation had a meeting on 17 May on the margins of the Third General Conference of the PA. Chairman of both the PAECO and the National Assembly of Pakistan Raja Pervaiz Ashraf opened the meeting; he thanked Azerbaijan for hosting the event and greeted the leaders and members of the participating parliamentary delegations of Azerbaijan, Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. The PAECO chairman turned to its history; he also praised the work done and the achievements made so far and stressed the importance of the matters tabled at the previous general conferences. Then, Chairman of Paki-



stan's National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf turned the chairmanship of the PAECO to Chair of Azer-

baijan's Milli Majlis Sahiba Gafarova. Sahiba Gafarova welcomed the meeting participants in her turn and

expressed her gratitude to Raja Pervaiz Ashraf for the effective work done so far before stating her

confidence that the forthcoming conference would prove fruitful. The agenda adoption was

followed by that of the report on the PAECO Second General Conference as well as the programme and agenda of the PAECO Third General Conference. organisational issues were considered as well. They elected the PAECO Deputy Chairman and decided on the venue and date of the next conference. Speaker Sahiba Gafarova let it be known that the leaders of the attending parliamentary delegations were going to go to Shusha tomorrow. They will travel to Shusha by the Victory Road laid in a short time and, once in Shusha, will become acquainted with the outcomes of the building and rebuilding work carried out in the town that is the cultural capital of Azerbaijan and the Cultural Capital of the Turkic World in 2023. And with that, the meeting of the PAECO Executive Council came to an end.

Pakistani pine nuts exports to China up \$25m first quarter

The reason is that after the Chinese Spring Festival, price always comes down. Besides, before the production season starts in September, the suppliers have inventory from the previous year." he stated

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistani Pine nuts exports to China in the first three months of this year achieved a historical figure of \$25.13 million, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Tuesday quoting General Administration of Customs of China (GACC). Data showed that in the first three months of 2022, China imported 2,299.21 tons of Pakistani pine nuts and was one of the main destinations of Pakistani pine nuts. Overall, China has imported 7,780.32 tons of pine nuts around the world valued at \$57.05

million, of which 44.04% by value and 29.55% is from Pakistan. In the first two months of 2022, China imported 1,606.51 tons of Pakistani pine nuts worth \$17.67 million, and in March, the imports reached 692.70 tons valued at \$7.45 million. Yar Muhammad Niaz, Chief Executive of Hangzhou Aiza Food Co, Ltd., told China Economic Net (CEN) that this year they are expecting a good crop of pine nuts but he is also afraid of environmental changes that could affect the crop. "Last year the price of pine nuts fluctuated too much. The price of unprocessed pine nuts has gone up to RMB 190 per kg, but the

overall price remained between RMB 170-180 per kg. Currently, the price is RMB 130 per kg. The reason is that after the Chinese Spring Festival, price always comes down. Besides, before the production season starts in September, the suppliers have inventory from the previous year," he stated. He further said that China is a big market for this product. To fulfill the demand, direct cargo flights are needed on regular basis and airlines should also provide subsidies for lower freight. Ali Raza, a local shopkeeper in Peshawar told CEN that when he buys unprocessed pine nuts, there are many empty shells, which is one

of the reasons for the high price. Secondly, when they process them after roasting, the taste changes, and in different areas the tastes vary because of the salt and water used during processing. "We need the latest technology to process pine nuts that could help maintain the taste and expedite the processing time. China is the largest importer of Pakistani pine nuts; therefore, we should use Chinese technology that would be cheap and would meet the consumers' demand," he added. It is to be noted that experts believe that this year in Pakistan, extreme weather in most parts of the country could affect the pine nuts crop as well.

Biden reestablishes US troop presence inside Somalia

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden has ordered the re-establishment of a US troop presence in Somalia to help local authorities combat the Al-Shabaab militant group, a senior American official told reporters Monday. The move reverses an order from Biden's predecessor Donald Trump, who in late 2020 pulled nearly all US forces from the East African nation as he sought to wind down US military engagements abroad during his final weeks in office. Biden "approved a request from the Defense Department to reposition US forces in East Africa in order to reestablish a small persistent US military presence in Somalia," the official said. Fewer than 500 troops will be involved, the official said, adding that it will "take a little bit of time to reach that" level in Somalia. That is slightly smaller than the original footprint of 750 US soldiers who spent years in the country conducting operations against Al-Shabaab, but were then removed under Trump and rebased in neighboring countries Kenya and Djibouti. In December 2020, just before he left office, Trump directed the withdrawal from Somalia "against the advice of senior US military leadership," the official said. "Since then Al-Shabaab... has unfortunately only grown stronger," the official added. The official suggested that Biden's decision had more to do with the security of US forces than with the election on Sunday of a new Somali president, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, after more than a year of political instability and a drought crisis. Somali leaders over recent years have been constant in their support for cooperation with the US military in battling Islamic extremists, the official said, adding that Washington remains confident the new administration will continue to do so. By reinserting US troops, Washington will reduce the risks involved in back-and-forth mobilizations of forces that have been conducting counterterrorism operations inside Somalia. The move would boost efficiency and the effectiveness of special operators, and allow for uninterrupted training periods with local partners. Pentagon Spokesman John Kirby said Monday that Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin viewed the current form of operations "inefficient and increasingly unsustainable." "The purpose here is to enable a more effective fight against Al-Shabaab by local forces... Al-Shabaab has increased in their strength and poses a threat," he said. - APP

Thailand's economy rebounds after Covid battering

BANGKOK: Thailand's economy grew 2.2 percent in the first quarter as exports and tourism rebounded after the relaxation of pandemic restrictions, the country's main economic agency said Tuesday. During the pandemic, Southeast Asia's second-largest economy suffered its worst economic performance since the 1997 Asian financial crisis, with visitor numbers crashing from roughly 40 million annually. But this month the tourism-dependent kingdom dropped almost all restrictions for fully vaccinated visitors, including the need for Covid-19 tests to travel. "The export sector is good... the tourism industry is getting better due to the relaxation of entry requirements for tourists," National Economic and Social Development Council secretary general Danucha Pichayanan said. The agency said the economy grew by 2.2 percent in January to March compared with the same period last year, and by 1.1 percent compared with the previous quarter. The figures are a stark turnaround from the depths of the pandemic, which saw the economy contract by 6.1 percent in 2020. - APP

Fighting erupts in Libya capital after rival PM enters city

TRIPOLI: Fighting broke out Tuesday in the capital of war-battered Libya between backers of two rival administrations, threatening renewed chaos in the oil-rich North African country. The clashes erupted in Tripoli before dawn and heavy exchanges of fire were raging around 7 am (0500 GMT), an AFP correspondent reported. Libya has been ruled by Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dbeibah, but he has been challenged by Fathi Bashagha, who was appointed as rival premier in February by the parliament in the country's eastern city of Tobruk. Violence flared after his press service announced "the arrival of the prime minister of the Libyan government, Mr Fathi Bashagha, accompanied by several ministers, in the capital Tripoli to begin his work there". There was no immediate reaction from the unity administration led Dbeibah, which was installed in 2020 as part of a troubled UN-backed peace process and which has since refused to step down. - APP



BAKU: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervaiz Ashraf along with the participants of the third general conference of the PAECO went to the Alley of Honour to remember National Leader of Azerbaijan Heydar Aliyev. DNA

US announces easing visa restrictions for Cuba

WASHINGTON: The United States said Monday it is easing restrictions imposed during former president Donald Trump's administration on travel to Cuba and on the sending of family remittances between the United States and the communist island. "The Cuban people are confronting an unprecedented humanitarian crisis and our policy will continue to focus on empowering the Cuban people to help them create a future free from repression and economic suffering," the State Department said. The loosening of the embargo on Cuba will see increased visa processing, including at the Havana consulate, but with most visas still handled at the US embassy in Guyana. The statement said it will "facilitate educational connections" between the two countries, as well as

support for professional research including "support for expanded internet access and remittance process companies." To boost the flow of remittances, the US government will lift the current limit of \$1,000 per quarter for each sender, and also allow non-family remittances to "support independent Cuban entrepreneurs." It said it would increase the number of flights permitted between the US and the Caribbean island, and serving cities other than the capital Havana. It will also allow certain group visits, which are currently forbidden. Cuba's foreign minister, Bruno Rodriguez, tweeted that the move was "a small step in the right direction," but emphasized that it does "not modify the embargo" in place since 1962. "Neither the objectives nor the main instruments of the United

States' policy against Cuba, which is a failure, are changing," he wrote. US Senator Bob Menendez, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and a member of President Joe Biden's Democratic Party, denounced the lifting of some restrictions, saying that the Cuban regime "continues its ruthless persecution of countless Cubans from all walks of life" following unprecedented street protests last year. The easing of travel "risks sending the wrong message to the wrong people, at the wrong time and for all the wrong reasons," he said in a statement. "Those who still believe that increasing travel will breed democracy in Cuba are simply in a state of denial. For decades, the world has been traveling to Cuba and nothing has changed." Republican Senator Marco Rubio, who

is of Cuban heritage, also slammed the announcement, saying on Twitter that the Cuban regime "threatened Biden with mass migration and have sympathizers inside the administration." He said "the result is today we see the first steps back to the failed Obama policy on Cuba," referring to former president Barack Obama's thaw in relations with Havana, including a visit there in 2016. Biden is seeking to tread a fine line between helping ordinary Cubans and encouraging democratic developments while not allowing the Communist regime to benefit from any easing of restrictions. The thaw comes in the wake of a series of mysterious illnesses suffered by US personnel and family members in Cuba in what has come to be known as "Havana Syndrome." - APP

CONDOLENCE



APNS expresses profound grief over the sad demise of

Mrs. Khursheed Akbar Kazi

mother of

Mr. Muhammad Aslam Kazi

(Chief Editor, Kawish Publications (Pvt.) Ltd.

and

Mr. Muhammad Ali Kazi

(Chief Editor, Pahrenji Akhbar).

May Allah the Almighty rest her soul in eternal peace

and grant courage to the family to bear the loss.



All Pakistan Newspapers Society

Briefs

Pakistan celebrates Buddhist Cultural Heritage on Vesak Day

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: An exhibition of artifacts, replicas, and photographs was organized at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to showcase Pakistan's Buddhist cultural heritage and Gandhara civilization. The Ambassadors of countries observing Vesak were invited to celebrate their Buddhist civilizational linkages with Pakistan. The Ambassadors/ High Commissioners of Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Nepal attended the event. Pakistani Experts and scholars on the subject also participated. The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar graced the occasion. In her address at the event, the Minister of State underlined the multicultural and diverse heritage of Pakistan. She also highlighted the significance of Pakistan's cultural connectivity with the South East and South Asian countries. She invited Buddhist tourists to visit Pakistan's Gandhara, which consists of UNESCO world heritage sites. Celebrating Vesak Day, H.E. Chakkrid Krachaiwong, Ambassador of Thailand and the coordinator of ASEAN, shared his thoughts on the message of Lord Buddha and appreciated Pakistan as a guardian of the religious sites of Buddhism and its role in the region as the center of Buddhist civilization. The event brought together a display of Gandhara artifacts in Pakistan, screening of documentary on Buddhist heritage and exhibition of Buddhist artifacts, photographs and crafts by participating embassies.

President pays tribute to valour of martyred troops

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday telephoned the families of the soldiers who were martyred in the May 14 terrorist attack in North Waziristan and paid tribute to their valour. The President spoke to the families of Sepoy Qasim Maqsood, Sepoy Uzair, and Lance Havaldar Zubair Qadir. President Alvi also called the families of Sepoy Muhammad Sirajuddin who embraced martyrdom in the line of duty in South Waziristan on April 26. He prayed to Allah Almighty for grant of elevated ranks to the souls of the martyrs and patience to their families.

Nigeria's envoy calls on Chairman NADRA

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan Ahmed Rufai Abu Bakar along with delegation called on Chairman NADRA Mr. Tariq Malik on Tuesday at NADRA Headquarters. Chairman NADRA Tariq Malik briefed the delegation headed by the Nigerian High Commissioner on various operations of NADRA and its success in achieving universal ID Registration coverage across Pakistan and utilization of National ID data to support various Government and Private sector initiatives, said a press release. During the briefing, Mr. Malik emphasized that following Government of Pakistan's "Look Africa Policy", NADRA is poised to work closely with many a government organization in Nigeria, Kenya, Sudan, and Somalia. He informed the delegation that NADRA has achieved instrumental success not only in reviving the stalled ID Card program in Nigeria but also under Transfer of Technology the authority has equipped and empowered the technical staff of NIMC, Nigeria in order to operate the National ID system independently. - APP

Pakistan, KSA reiterate desire to further strengthen ties

The President also asked the Ambassador to convey his warm regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and His Royal Highness and shared that the people of Pakistan pray for his good health and long life

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) have expressed the desire to further strengthen long-standing fraternal ties which are based on common religion, shared values and culture. This was discussed at a meeting between President Dr Arif Alvi and the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Mr Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Talking to the envoy, the President said that Pakistan accorded utmost importance to its ties with KSA which had always supported Pakistan in difficult times, adding that both countries enjoyed significant convergence on a number of regional and global issues. He urged the need to further develop a strategic and broad-based partnership with KSA in different areas for the mutual interest of the two brotherly countries. It was emphasised to further enhance commercial bonds and encourage businessmen and chambers of commerce of both countries to interact regularly to further boost bilateral trade relations. The President also highlighted that over 2 million Pakistani diaspora in KSA was playing a significant role in the progress and development of both brotherly countries. The President also asked the Ambassador to convey his warm regards to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and His Royal Highness and shared that the people of Pakistan pray for his good health and long life.



France names first female PM in 30 years



PARIS: Elisabeth Borne has been named the new Prime Minister of France, the first time in 30 years that a woman has held position. Borne will replace Jean Castex in the role, the Elysée Palace said in a statement on Monday, becoming only the second woman ever to serve as Prime Minister since the end of WWII. The country's first was Édith Cresson, who served between May 1991 and April 1992 under Socialist President François Mitterrand. Borne formerly served as minister of the environment, transportation and labor. She will lead a French government likely to be tasked with delivering on President Macron's election campaign priorities: retirement reform and the scaling up of policies designed to combat climate change. Her appointment follows President Emmanuel Macron's reelection on April 24. Borne has been "entrusted with forming a government," according to the Elysée. She dedicated her nomination to "every little girl," during a ceremony on Monday marking the transfer of power. "Follow your dreams all way," Borne said in a speech. "Nothing must hold back the fight for place of women in society." - DNA

Cabinet forms committee to amend the NAB law

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet on Tuesday constituted a committee, under the federal law minister, to amend the "draconian law" of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to do away with political victimization. The cabinet which met in Islamabad on Tuesday with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair, approved that the committee to be headed by the Law Minister and comprises leading experts of law, banking, bureaucracy and other sectors. During the detailed discussion on amendments in the NAB law, the cabinet members termed it a black legislation, which has been used for political victimization and to harass government employees and the business community. Due to the very reasons, the bureaucracy felt frightened while making the decisions, making the country suffer in critical matters. Discussing the ongoing severe heatwave, the cabinet also formed a special task force under the ministry of climate change on the subject. The task force would take measures to do away with the impacts of the climate change to protect the country from the future hazards. A report on the review of Civil Servants (Directory Retirement from Service) Rule 2020 was also presented to the cabinet. It was told that the said rules consisted of the regulations which already existed in the Government Servant (Efficiency and Discipline) Rules 2020. The cabinet members viewed that the said rules were used

to pressurize the government officers which had no legal justification as overriding laws could not be made. The members also called for fair and indiscriminate accountability process. Approving the committee's recommendations, the federal cabinet annulled the Civil Servants (Directory Retirement from Service) Rules 2020, and also approved the withdrawal of proceedings against the government officers under the said rules. The federal cabinet nodded to the design of a commemorative bank note to mark the 75th anniversary of Pakistan, on the recommendation of the finance ministry. The finance ministry had recommended the printing of bank notes from an international firm which would cost \$6.64 million. Rejecting the finance ministry's proposal, the federal cabinet decided that the bank notes should be printed locally to save the public money. The commerce ministry briefed the federal cabinet on the detailed analysis on exports, imports and balance of payment. It was told that export volume during fiscal 2021-22 was \$31.2 billion and the import stood at \$76.7 billion. During the said period, export increased by \$4.95 billion and imports by \$11.16 billion. An increase of 25.6% was recorded in exports during July-April of fiscal 2020-21 comparing the corresponding period of 2021-22. The imports also grew by 46.5% and trade balance by 64.9%. The cabinet members were told that in order to increase the exports, it was essential to provide gas and electricity at the competitive price at par with the other countries in the region.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan discuss co-op in labor, employment

ISLAMABAD: Azerbaijani Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov and Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sajid Hussain Turi have discussed cooperation in labor, employment, and social protection spheres, media reported. The focus of the meeting was on boosting the Pakistani-Azerbaijani ties and the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for co-operation in the sphere of labor, employment, and social protection between the two countries. Turi expressed satisfaction with the growing cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, underlining the importance of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), as well as enhanced interaction at the leadership level to share the national labor market demand between the two countries. "I was delighted to meet with H. E. Mr. Sajid Hussain Turi, Minister of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development. The current level of the Azerbaijani-Pakistani bilateral relations, as well as the importance of continuing the intensive contacts between relevant Ministries of both countries, were discussed at the meeting," Farhadov wrote on his Twitter account on May 17. - DNA



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

Don't see US as enemy, have reservations: Taliban

The Taliban deputy chief then added that in the future, "we would like to have good relations with the United States and the international community, based on rules and principles that exist in the rest of the world". "And based on their arrangement, we have made [a] commitment with them"

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Acting Afghan Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani has said the Taliban regime in Afghanistan does not look at the United States "as enemies" and wants to have good ties with it but that they have reservations over Washington's intentions based on its conduct. The deputy chief of the Afghan Taliban - who is still wanted by the US that has offered a reward of \$10 million for information leading to his arrest - made these remarks during his first on-camera interview with CNN's Christiane Amanpour in Kabul, more than two months after making his first public appearance in the Afghan capital to address a passing-out parade for police. During the interview, Amanpour asked Haqqani that "do you consider America still to be your enemy?" Haqqani - whose replies were translated and played as a voiceover - began his answer

with saying that he wanted to make a "small clarification". "The period of the last 20 years was a situation of defensive fighting and war," he said, recalling that when an agreement was reached between the Afghan Taliban and the Trump administration in Doha in February 2020, "we decided that we would not be talking about this". He did not elaborate further as to what was not to be talked about. The Taliban deputy chief then added that in the future, "we would like to have good relations with the United States and the international community, based on rules and principles that exist in the rest of the world". "And based on their arrangement, we have made [a] commitment with them," he continued, adding that currently, "we do not look at them as enemies". But, he said, "based on their conduct, the Afghans have reservations about their intentions". "From our side, the freedom of the country and struggling for the country's

defence is a legitimate right, in accordance with international rules," he said, reiterating that as of now, the Taliban did not consider the US an enemy. "And we have time and again spoken about diplomacy. We are committed to the Doha agreement. Like the rest of the world, we want relations with them based on principles and diplomatic norms that they establish with us, and that they don't go back on that," Haqqani said. Leading on from there, Amanpour pointed out to Haqqani that he not just had a multi-million dollar bounty on his head but was also under sanctions by the US. She then went on to quote a "top Western official" speaking about Haqqani. "This is what a top Western official told me just before I got here. He said: 'We are in a new world. The guy (Haqqani) has a huge amount of American blood on his hands. He has got, in the Taliban, the tightest ties to extremist movements. He was one of the first to put women back to work in his min-

istry. We have seen his ministry take promising steps to contain terrorism. To call it a paradox is an understatement. This is not just my opinion. It is the opinion of every single envoy working on these issues.'" She then underscored that while the US, on the one hand, believed Haqqani to be a terrorist, on the other hand, it thought it could work with him. "What do you say to that?" In response, Haqqani maintained that "this is a judgement that they should make". He added that in order to create a secure Afghanistan, the Taliban had sent a positive message to the world, as well as the Afghan nation. "While the previous condition had concealed our real picture. And currently, praise God - and that the conditions of freedom - our conduct is being revealed gradually to the international community and also, this is being revealed to certain circles within the country who are thinking negatively about us," Haqqani said.

PM praises Sinovac's interest for joint venture

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday welcomed the China-based biopharmaceutical company Sinovac over its keen interest for a joint venture to diagnose, prevent and treat diseases by investing in Pakistan. In a meeting with a delegation of Sinovac, the prime minister said the government would extend all possible cooperation in this regard. The meeting was attended by General Manager Sinovac Qiang Gao, Director International Business Kevin Zhang, Federal Minister for Health Abdul Qadir Patel, Executive Director National Institute of Health Major General Professor Amir Ikram and relevant senior officials. The prime minister was briefed on the vaccine provided by Sinovac to Pakistan during the COVID-19 vaccination campaign. The prime minister directed the Federal Minister of Health to immediately form a task force in this regard so that Sinovac could start work on the project soon. PM Sharif said to increase the foreign direct investment in the country was one of the top priorities of the government. He said Pakistan valued the assistance extended by China during the pandemic.

IHC stops Hanif Abbasi from performing duties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Tuesday stopped Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) leader Hanif Abbasi from performing duties as Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM). The court passed the order while hearing the petition filed by former Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid. IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah remarked that Abbasi should not hold a public office till the next hearing. The PML-N leader's counsel Ahsan Bhon argued the office of the special assistant is not a "public office," thus he shouldn't be stopped from performing his duties. However, the chief justice remarked that the court expects Abbasi not to work as special assistant as a convicted person cannot hold any public office.

Finland's Parliament approves NATO application

HELSINKI: Finland's legislature on Tuesday approved the country's bid for NATO membership with 188 votes in favor and eight against, Parliament Speaker Matti Vanhanen said. The vote comes after two days of parliamentary debate, during which the foreign affairs committee said that "Russia's long-standing aggressive policies and the goal of dividing Europe into new spheres of influence took on a new dimension after the country's invasion of Ukraine." "Failure to respond would lead to a narrowing of Finland's foreign, security and defense policy," it added. The vote in Parliament was seen a formality, as Finnish President Sauli Niinisto and Prime Minister Sanna Marin had already announced that Finland would go ahead and that minimal opposition was expected. "Our security environment has fundamentally changed," Prime Minister Marin told parliament on Monday at the start of the debate. The vote clears the way for a Finnish application for membership in the Western defense alliance. President Niinisto will now have to sign the application and hand it in to NATO's headquarters in Brussels. Finland and Sweden have said they intend to submit their applications in unison, as the Swedish government voted yesterday to apply for NATO membership. Sweden's Foreign Minister Ann Linde had already signed her country's application on Tuesday morning. - APP