

Islamabad POST

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Biden says 'hello' to North Korea's Kim amid tensions

Detailed News On Page-06

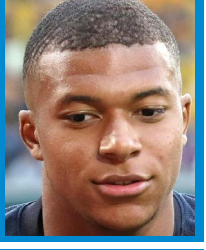
SCO to play role for economic integration

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Mbappe in position of power at PSG

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Briefs

Democracy vital for progress

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif says country will progress, if democracy prevails in the country. Addressing a news conference in Lahore on Sunday, he said that the previous government remained busy in political vendetta instead of completing development works. The Prime Minister regretted that a welfare project of Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute worth twenty billion rupees was ceased just for political revenge. Shehbaz Sharif said that hospital will provide paid medical facilities to opulent class and funds generated from the treatment of rich people will be utilized for the free medical treatment of patients belonging to the underprivileged class.

Sherry to raise climate issue at WEF

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Climate Change Senator Sherry Rehman will be raising the climate change issue at the annual meeting of World Economic Forum 2022. This year's theme "History at a turning point" will deal with ongoing challenges faced by the world including the global pandemic, the war in Ukraine, geo-economic shocks and climate change. Senator Sherry Rehman will be attending a number of WEF events on climate change and its impacts on the global community and Pakistan.

Zardari hurdle in fresh polls

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Vice-Chairman Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that Asif Ali Zardari is becoming a hurdle in the organisation of fresh elections in the country, media reported on Sunday. Qureshi clarified that his political party was not part of any conspiracy against the national institutions.

Bilawal, Yi hold talks

Pak, China to work for Afghan peace

Joint statement calls for deeper bilateral ties; vow to continue CPEC come what may

NEWS DESK/DNA

BEIJING: Both Pakistan and China have resolved to work for the Afghan peace. Both sides have also called upon the Afghan interim government to work for an all inclusive government. According to a joint communiqué issued on Sunday, at the invitation of State Councilor and Foreign Minister H.E. Wang Yi, H.E. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari visited Guangzhou on 21-22 May 2022 for his first official bilateral visit after taking office as Foreign Minister of Pakistan. The visit coincided with the 71st anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Pakistan. During the visit, State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi and Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari held in-depth discussions on the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and international issues of shared interest. The talks were conducted in a warm and friendly atmosphere, in line with the finest tradition of mutual trust and cooperation between the two countries. The

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FM Bilawal, Chinese FM discuss CPEC

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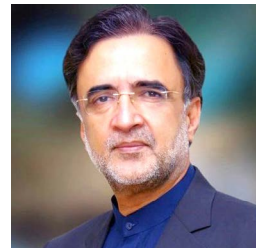
GUANGZHOU: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari discussed economic co-ordination, industrialisation and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with Chinese counterpart Wang Yi on Sunday. The meeting was held in Guangzhou, where the foreign minister arrived earlier today on his first bilateral visit at Wang's invitation since assuming office in April. Taking to Twitter, Bilawal thanked Wang for his warm reception and gracious hospitality. "During wide-ranging talks with State Councilor Wang Yi, discussed enhanced economic engagement, trade,

Continued on Page 06



GUANGZHOU: State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari cutting a cake to commemorate 71st anniversary of Diplomatic relations. - DNA

Kaira condemns conviction of Yasin Malik
Says Hurriyat leader has been continuously struggling against atrocities



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Qamar Zaman Kaira has strongly condemned the recent conviction of the veteran Kashmiri leader Yaseen Malik on basis of flimsy and fake grounds. He said, the political motivated unjustified trail is a grave human rights violation and is against the norms of fundamental rights. The Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik has been continuously struggling against atrocities such as extra judicial killings, raping of women etc committed by the Indian government in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The Adviser said, India had failed to dismantle the firm resolve of Yaseen Malik after keeping him under illegal

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Crisis intensifies as Ukraine rules out ceasefire

'The situation in Donbas is extremely difficult,' Ukrainian President says

NEWS DESK

'Ukraine must decide its own future'

AGENCIES

KYIV: Ukraine ruled out a ceasefire or concessions to Moscow while Russia intensified an offensive in the eastern Donbas region and stopped providing gas to Finland, as Polish President Andrzej Duda prepared to address the Ukrainian parliament on Sunday. After ending weeks of resistance by the last Ukrainian fighters in the strategic south-eastern city of Mariupol, Russia is waging a major offensive in Luhansk, one of two provinces in Donbas. Russian-backed separatists already controlled swathes of territory in Luhansk and the neighbouring Donetsk province before the Feb. 24 invasion, but Moscow wants to seize the last remaining Ukrainian-held territory in Donbas. "The situation in Donbas is extremely difficult," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly address. The Russian army was trying to attack the cities of Sloviansk and Sievierodonetsk, but Ukrainian forces were holding off their advance, he said. Zelenskyy adviser Mykhailo

KYIV: Only Ukraine has the right to decide its future, the Polish president told lawmakers in Kyiv on Sunday, as he became the first foreign leader to give a speech in person to the Ukrainian parliament since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion. Kyiv has ruled out any peace deal that would involve it ceding territory and has dismissed calls for a ceasefire that would involve Russian forces remaining in territory they have occupied, saying this would simply give Moscow time to rebuild its forces. "Worrying voices have appeared, saying that Ukraine should give in to Putin's demands," Andrzej Duda said. "Only Ukraine has the right to decide about its future... nothing about you without you," he added.

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Imran to lead march

PTI announces long march on May 25

March participants to stay in the Capital till announcement of election date



BUREAU REPORT/DNA

PESHAWAR: PTI Chairman Imran Khan announced on Sunday that his party's much-anticipated Islamabad long march will begin on May 25 and he will meet his workers and supporters at 3pm at the Srinagar Highway. Khan made the announcement while holding a press conference in Peshawar after concluding a meeting of the PTI's core committee. The former prime minister was flanked by several party leaders, including Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Mahmood Khan. Later, taking to Twitter, he told his

Continued on Page 06

Khan's long march worthless: Fazl

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan's long march is worthless against the sitting coalition government. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl group (JUL-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman addressed a tribal Jirga and traders in Peshawar on Sunday afternoon. He urged to inform the people about the usage of funds allocated for the tribes. He said the decisions

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Pak, China ties based on mutual respect: Marriyum

She also read the message from the Prime Minister

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said that Pakistan and China enjoyed exemplary fraternal relations rooted in people-to-people contacts and based on mutual respect. According to China Economic Net, she said this during her visit to the Chinese Embassy here on the occasion of the 71st anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations on the special instructions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. On the occasion, she also read the message from the Prime Minister. She said that Pakistan's friendship with China started with strategic partnership and diplomatic relations. The people of Pakistan and China are bound in everlasting friendship. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is an example of Pakistan's economic prosperity and strategic partnership, a symbol of economic growth and prosperity for the region's youth and future generations, said the minister.



"Relations between Pakistan and China are of special importance because they start with the people of Pakistan and China", she maintained. The minister remarked that whenever a new project was launched in Pakistan, the people believed that it would be for their benefit. The people of both the countries were bound in an everlasting bond of love and fraternity, she said. Marriyum said that the unfortunate terrorist incident target-

ing Chinese nationals in Karachi was an attempt to sabotage Pak-China relations. The minister said that the Prime Minister has re-examined the security infrastructure and mechanisms and was himself monitoring the situation. Marriyum Aurangzeb said when the Karachi incident took place, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif canceled all

Continued on Page 06

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The point-of-sale system does not provide equal opportunities

Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah has said that FTO has provided relief to more than 1900 taxpayers



DNA

LAHORE: Federal Tax Ombudsman Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah has said that FTO has provided relief to more than 1900 taxpayers in the last five months, which is almost double as compared to the same period last year. He said that the proposals of the pre-budget meeting convened by the FTO a few months back had been forwarded to the FBR and other concerned agencies on which progress was made.

Negotiations have started with It is expected that the suggestions of traders and industrialists will be included in the next budget better than in the past. Dr. Asif Mehmood Jah said that a number of suggestions made by him for the reform of the tax system are likely to be implemented. He said that this organization is active in serving

the people and is resolving the issues as soon as possible. He said that FBR has also issued SRO on the suggestions of FTO regarding reduction of difficulties in steel sector.

He was addressing a seminar on budget of FTO Central Advisory Committee at Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Senior Vice President of Lahore Chamber of Commerce Rehman Aziz Chan and Vice President Haris Atiq, FTO Advisor Almas Ali Jonda and Dr. Sarfraz Warraich also spoke on the occasion. The FTO said that income tax on daily wage employees with an annual income of Rs 600,000 has been abolished. He said that more than 100 persons who had been issued irrelevant notices by the FBR had been removed from Tier 1 and directed the FBR to take action against the officers who had issued such notices. He said that they were introducing

simple and expeditious solutions for registering complaints and were formulating strategies for speedy resolution of taxpayers' problems. He said that due to the efforts of FTO, FBR has given the authority to issue exclusion certificate to the Commissioner through DG Point of C. Referring to the recent ban on imports of luxury goods, the FTO said it was reviewing the difficulties faced by importers.

He is playing a very important role in the affairs of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce Senior Vice President Rehman Aziz Chan as the Coordinating Committee. On the occasion, Lahore Chamber Vice President Haris Atiq said that the confidence of the business community in the FTO office was increasing. He said that attention should be paid to the suggestions given by the Lahore Chamber of Commerce regarding SME sector. He said that steps should be taken to reduce the turnover tax. The Vice President further said that it would be a good step for the complainants to register their complaints on Zoom from where they live. Dr. Sarfraz Ahmed Warraich told the participants that the Pakistani business community, especially shopkeepers, were concerned about the FBR's Tier One System (POS). They have a number of concerns about the potential misuse of this set. In the financial year 2021-22, the FBR had set a target of bringing 60,000 vendors under this system, out of which barely 7,000 vendors could be brought under this system (point of sale).



LAHORE: PM Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute. – DNA

PML-N, allies express confidence in CM Hamza

LAHORE: A joint parliamentary party meeting of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and its ally parties unanimously passed a resolution on Sunday, expressing complete confidence in the leadership of Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz. The resolution, submitted in the meeting, chaired by CM Hamza Shehbaz, strongly condemned the undemocratic steps hindering the progress of the province and creating obstacles for the government to perform its constitutional duties.

The resolution also condemned undemocratic steps taken by the PTI to hamper the appointment of the Punjab governor. The resolution condemned the step for not acting upon the stipulated seven days time period given in the Constitution to move no-confidence motion against Speaker Punjab Assembly Pervaiz Elahi. The PML-N parliamentary party meeting also condemned the unconstitutional steps adopted by Speaker Pervaiz Elahi by resorting to misuse of authority in order to impede no-confidence motion against him. The resolution submitted during the meeting also unanimously expressed no-confidence in Speaker Punjab Assembly Pervaiz Elahi. The resolution was submitted by Member Punjab Assembly Rana Mashood Ahmad and all the members endorsed the resolution by raising their hands. – APP

Man kills spouse

FAISALABAD: A man has killed his wife over a domestic issue near here in the precincts of Khurri-anwala police station. A police spokesman said on Sunday that accused Zeeshan, resident of chak 200-RB Lathianwala, got enraged after an altercation with his wife Fauza over a domestic issue. Over the issue, the accused along with his brother Saleem allegedly killed Fauza and hanged her body with a ceiling fan in her house to cover up the crime. – APP

Al-Khidmat Foundation undertaking mega welfare projects

DNA

FAISALABAD: Al-Khidmat Foundation is undertaking mega welfare projects but providing the facilities of boarding, lodging, health and education etc to more than nineteen thousand orphans across the country is a unique distinction of this NGO. Addressing the Eid Milan party of Al-Khidmat Foundation, Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) said that Al-Khidmat Foundation has extended the best services to the calamity hit people in the most

transparent manner. He said that the transparency has restored the confidence of donors and they feel free to donate generously for this NGO without any hesitation. He said the taking care of nineteen thousand orphans is a major initiative out of which one thousand children are housed only in Faisalabad. He said that he himself is affiliated with the Lion International Club which is also a leading global NGO working for the welfare of neglected segments of the society. "I am highly impressed by the working of Al-Khidmat Foundation and shall try my best to

convince the business community to donate for it generously", he added. During this colourful event, the students presented skits; tableau and other programs while a drawing contest was also held. President Atif Munir Sheikh appreciated the skills of the children and presented them "Eidee" worth Rs. 1 Lac from his own pocket. Rana Sikandar e Azam former president FCCI, Chaudhary Talat Mehmood and executive member Mian Abdul Waheed also participated in it and appreciated the effectiveness of the projects launched by Al-Khidmat Foundation.

'FESCO striving hard to facilitate customers'

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) is striving hard to provide maximum facilities to its customers. In this connection, the process for the registration of paperless complaints has been started for early solution of consumers electricity related complaints. The basic aim of paperless

complaints is to redress the consumer's complaints immediately, said GM Customer Services, Itrat Hussain. He further said that now consumers would be able to register their complaints via SMS on 8118 or by phone 118 from where their complaint would be immediately transferred to the concerned SDO who will be restricted to rectify it immediately. He said that this method would not only save the precious time of the consumers but also make it possible to resolve their grievances in minimum time. Similarly, they would not have to bother to visit FESCO offices. He appealed to the consumers to use 8118 or 118 for registration of their electricity related complaints. These numbers are also being published on bills across the region, for the awareness of consumers.

Ashrafi stresses tolerance, harmony

LAHORE: Mutthida Ulema Board Punjab Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi has stressed ulema to encourage and support tolerance as it is need of the hour. Addressing a press conference at Jamia Masjid Al-Mustafa, Johar Town here on Sunday, he said that intolerance was causing instability in society. He urged ulema and politicians to teach tolerance and peace to their workers. – APP

AAIB preparing final report on PIA plane crash-2020: Aviation Division

ISLAMABAD: A spokesperson for the Aviation Division on Sunday said the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board (AAIB) team was in process of preparing the draft of a final report on the PIA plane crash that occurred two years ago near Jinnah International Airport, claiming 98 precious lives. "Despite restrictions due to COVID-19 pandemic and related challenges, by now the team has collected all required evidence and is presently working on the draft of a final report," the spokesperson said in a news release here. On May 22, 2020, the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA)'s ill-fated flight (PK8303) from Lahore - Karachi had crashed close to Jinnah International Airport, Karachi. As many as 97 out of 99 passengers and crew on board had lost their lives. Only two passengers had miraculously survived, while there was one fatality on the ground, the spokesperson added. Soon after the tragedy, a probe was ordered immediately by the federal government with the constitution of the air crash accident investigation team, which submitted its preliminary report within a month that was made public. In the light of the preliminary investigation report, the spokesperson said the AAIB team had been undertaking an extensive search for relevant evidence in collaboration with foreign stakeholders to probe the root cause of the accident, following the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization) protocols. In accordance with the ICAO requirements, the second interim statement had been issued by AAIB Pakistan, which is available on Aviation Division's website. – APP

IGP for filling vacant posts in Islamabad police

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Dr. Akbar Nasir Khan has directed Deputy Inspector General (DIG) headquarters to initiate the process to fill all the vacant posts in the department to minimize shortage of staff. He passed the directions during an introductory meeting here at police lines headquarters after assuming the charge as Capital Police chief, replacing Muhammad Ahsan Younus the other day. Senior officers of Islamabad police attended the meeting. Addressing participants, the IGP asked the force to bridge the gap between police and the public to win the trust of the masses. He said families of Police martyrs should be treated in the best way and utilize all available resources for their welfare. "Every officer should treat his subordinates equally, bring smiles to others faces," said the new IGP also adding that the law of equality is the best law in the world. He expressed the hope that the force will put its utmost effort to ensure rule of law and protection of public lives and property. – APP

More than 15 gypsy huts gutted in a fire

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: More than 15 huts were gutted by fire in gypsy huts in Tehsil Hazro Attock. According to rescue sources, gypsy huts were set up in Hazro on Sunday. The fire broke out and engulfed more than 15 huts. Rescue vehicles barely managed to contain the blaze. No casualties were reported. According to rescue sources, the cause of the fire could not be ascertained.



LALAMUSA: Prime Minister Adviser on Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira planting a tree during tree plantation drive. – DNA

1.38m children to be administered polio drops

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: As many as 1.38 million children upto age of five years would be administered polio drops during the next anti polio campaign which would continue from May 23 to 29 May in the district and 4869 teams would be performing duty during the campaign. The anti polio campaign in district has been inaugurated here on Saturday at Pathan Colony near Railway A station. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad inaugurated the anti polio campaign by administering the polio vaccine drops to the pakhtoon children. AC city Sahibzada Muhammad Yousaf, CEO DHA Dr. Bilal Ahmad, District Program Co-ordinator for Epidemics Dr.

Zulqarnain, Dr. Soghair from WHO, Pakhtoon leaders were present on the occasion. Expressing his views, Deputy Commissioner said that the anti polio campaign required deep attention and utmost responsibility to complete eradicate the polio virus from the country. He directed that each and every child of upto five years age should be vaccinated besides approaching the nomads. He said that he would himself check the performance of polio teams by visiting different areas of district. He emphasized upon continuing wide awareness campaign for the information of the parents. Deputy Commissioner said that the anti polio campaign could only be made successful with the cooperation of the parents and all out source of publicity should be utilized for mobilizing the parents to get their child administered polio drops. He said that administrative machinery would remain active during the polio campaign for the supervision. He informed that this polio campaign would consist of 7 days and earlier the campaign comprised of 5 days. Deputy Commissioner asked the DHA that the polio teams would reach to each and every child of under five year of age for administered the polio vaccine to rule out any chance of polio virus in future. He informed that comprehensive security plan had also been devised for the protection of polio teams and the officers of district administration would also remain in the field to supervise the arrangements. He asked the citizen to co-operate with polio teams so the campaign could be successful. CEO DHA informed that all arrangements had been finalized for successful implementation of micro plan of anti polio campaign.

Mushaal seeks UN intervention to avoid Yasin's conviction

Yasin's spouse also demanded of the Pakistani govt to declare the Kashmiri freedom fighter a prisoner of consciousness and led a global campaign against Malik's conviction in fabricated cases by the Indian courts



ISLAMABAD: The senior Hurriyat leader Mushaal Hussein Mullick demanded the United Nation to intervene and stop the fascist Narendra Mod-led government from convicting Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Yasin Malik in fabricated and fictitious cases. Speaking at a press conference along with former Deputy Speaker Faisal Karim Kundi here on Sunday, Mushaal said that the international community, UN bodies and human rights organizations should wake up from their deep slumber as brutal Indian authorities were all-set to convict her husband in fake cases on May 25. The Hurriyat leader said that Yasin was constantly tortured in the notorious Tihar prison, where he suffered from a brain haemorrhage. She revealed that Indian brutal authorities have crossed the

limits of barbarism and fascism as he was even not allowed to speak what to talk of a free trial. Mushaal went on to say that the senior Hurriyat leader was kept in solitary confinement as even his family members were not allowed to meet him. Mushaal, who is also Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organization, stated that Yasin was suffering from several diseases but he has been deprived the much-needed life-saving drugs due to which his health was so deteriorated that even it was difficult to recognize him in the video. "Even international basic rights guaranteed for prisoners are not also given to Yasin Malik," she said. Yasin's spouse also demanded of the Pakistani government to declare the Kashmiri freedom fighter a prisoner of consciousness and led a global campaign against Malik's conviction in fabricated cases by

the Indian courts. "I request the government of Pakistan to give me and my daughter access to Yasin Malik, to talk to them, and to launch a global campaign to get him out (from the Indian custody)," she added. Mushaal said her husband in Tihar Jail was not being provided counsellor access and the right to a fair and transparent trial for his defence. "We are deprived of our due rights and my daughter has not listened to her father during the last eight years," she said. She said that denying Yasin the right to a transparent and free trial, was an open violation of international law and human rights but the world at large observed criminal silence in this regard. She urged that the international community should take notice of India's blatant violations of international law and human rights protocols against Yasin and he should be declared a protected personality. – APP

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

MAY

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



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SCO states to play key role for global economic integration

Ambassador says, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has important member countries in terms of geo-economic and geopolitical position, including developed economies, which can play an important role in the development of global and regional economies

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan, Aybek Arif Usmanov on Sunday said that Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member countries could play a key role in global and regional economic and trade integration in the current scenario. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has important member countries in terms of geo-economic and geopolitical position, including developed economies, which can play an important role in the development of global and regional economies through this organizational platform, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan told. The SCO countries' trade and economic bloc can combine the markets of the European Union and Eurasia for trade interests by merging South Asia and Central Asia, he said. The Ambassador said that in the same way, world trade can be linked by gaining



market access to key trading regions such as Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEANs) and the Middle East through this important global trade bloc, which is expected to accelerate in the world of trade. He said that Uzbekistan, as the chair of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization annual summit 2022 of the SCO Heads of State Council, was hoisting on September 15-16

in Samarkand. The Uzbek Ambassador said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan have a very important role to play in providing trade and economic integration to the SCO member countries, which will usher in a new era of economic integration in all member countries. He said that technology, information technology and renewable energy would be the major topics at the SCO summit this year which would help in reshaping trade and economic relations between the member countries. There will also be sessions on telemedicine at the Summit this year, which has led to the introduction of many facets in the medical field after Covid-19, which could open up new avenues for economic cooperation in the member states, he said. He said that at the same time, member states are likely to sign agreements on renewable energy? He said that women empowerment is a major issue which will be discussed in the member countries and fu-

ture strategy will be worked out on it. The Ambassador said that the leadership of the SCO countries, including the Central Asian countries, is now fully committed to the economic and trade integration of the member countries and increase in bilateral trade and economic activities. Ambassador Usmanov said that facilities and road and rail links are very important in bilateral and transit trade which will increase economic activities in SCO countries. He said that the logistics and transportation sector is of utmost importance in this regard which needs to be strengthened. He said that sea routes need to be opened for trade and at present a trade agreement has been signed between Pakistan and Uzbekistan through Karachi and Gwadar ports. He said that in this regard a connectivity terminal will be built in the city of Tirmuz in Uzbekistan, which will connect Pakistan with Central Asian countries including Euro-sain and European and maritime markets.

COMSTECH Forum on Environment to be launched

ISLAMABAD: The launching ceremony of 'COMSTECH Forum on Environment and Ecosystem Restoration' (CFEER) along with a seminar on 'Land Degradation' will be held on June 6 at COMSTECH Secretariat to mark the World Environment Day. According to an official of COMSTECH, the seminar will cover various topics including Evaluation of land degradation based on watershed modeling and monitoring, Sustainable Land and Water Management (SLM) practices in arid and semi-arid regions, Induced climate change on the hydrology and landscape and crop production and Socio-hydrology and land management. The webinar is open to students, researchers, scientists, policy makers, independent think tanks, government officials and academicians from the OIC member states and other countries. The intended participants can register at the following link: <https://forms.gle/578fqs4uuj4LpBQA> to attend the event physically while they can register for virtual participation through <https://forms.gle/UAKWCBq8juDe9CBe6>. The workshop will be held at the COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan. Land degradation has socio-economic and environmental repercussions impacting food and water security and the livelihoods of agricultural communities. Induced climate change, and particularly the dynamics of extreme events includ-

ing floods and droughts is expected to accelerate the rate of degradation, and, at the same time, posing a real risk of desertification. Over the past few decades, as a result of the multiple drivers, including rapid population growth and socio-political changes and conflicts, increased demand for natural resources, poor land-use planning, agricultural intensification and climate change. Various local key drivers of degradation relate with local and historical management, super-imposed by natural or anthropogenic triggered events. This rampant degradation has led to unsustainable agricultural systems, increased rural to urban migration, and eventually to the loss of ecosystem services. Some of the problems are erosion, reduced soil fertility, loss of biodiversity and habitats, water quality degradation for surface flow and groundwater, salinization, wildfires. In particular, dry lands, where water is scarce and in many cases not available during summer, it is difficult to maintain a cover crop to prevent erosion, and in many rural areas it may be costly to acquire new technologies for reduced tillage or precision agriculture. Erosion and loss of topsoil will further result in losses in food production capacity. Soil and water management practices (SWMP) have been developed for the prevention of further degradation and suggested for the restoration of degraded land. - APP

Minister urges world to take notice of Yasin Malik's trial

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights Riaz Hussain Pirzada has urged the world to take notice of the one-sided and dubious judicial trial of Kashmiri leader Yasin Malik and his possible murder through the ongoing sham proceedings. Addressing a press conference along with Yasin Malik's wife Mashal Malik in Islamabad, he expressed the fear that Indian authorities are running a sham trial against Yasin Malik on farcical grounds to award death sentence or life imprisonment to him. He said Pakistan will raise this issue at the Human Rights Council in Geneva and all other world fora.

Speaking on the occasion, Mashal Malik said Kashmir is a disputed territory as per UN resolutions and the world community has the jurisdiction to play its



role to save the life of Yasin Malik. She said that it is feared that India will execute Yasin Malik, adding that India has

violated international law. Yasin Malik's daughter Razia Sultana appealed to the world to save her father's life. - APP

Dry Port Road of I-10 may be completed soon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Industrial Association led by President IIA Muhammad Zikria Akbar Zia visited CDA Head Office Islamabad. He also called on Chairman Capital Development Authority Amir Ahmad Ali in which officers of relevant departments including member planning were also present. During the meeting, the President of the Industrial Association appreciated the development work done by the management of the Capital Development Authority in kahuta Industrial Triangle. A request was also made for further improvement of roads infrastructure including construction, which was immediately approved by the Chairman CDA and directed the concerned departments to im-

mediately start the work of expansion including construction and repair of this road. Similarly, parking issues of heavy vehicles should also be addressed on priority basis. In addition, a committee has been constituted under the supervision of DG Works under the direction of Chairman Capital Development Authority to resolve the issues of Industrial Area. A focal person has also been appointed who will monitor the speed and quality of work including solving their problems. The committee will also meet every fortnight to discuss the speed, quality and other issues of the work in the area and try to resolve them as soon as possible.

Former president of Islamabad Association M. Akram Farid said that the CDA administration should fulfill its promise of demarcation of dispensary and mosque

plots for the working class of the industrial area, which is a long standing demand of the industrial association. The Industrial Area also has a plot allotted by CDA which needs only demarcation. The Industrial Association also has funds for the construction of a mosque and dispensary. The working class will be able to benefit - on the demand for lease renewal and rate during the CDA meeting, the CDA management said that suggestions in this regard should be presented in the next board meeting. On this occasion, Chairman CDA said that all possible steps should be taken for the promotion of business and economy and the problems faced by the traders should be resolved on priority basis. At the direction of CDA management, all measures are being taken to eliminate all encroachments from shopping malls, solve parking problems and all other issues.

NAB seeks compensation claims against fake housing schemes

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Rawalpindi has asked the persons cheated by four illegal housing scheme's management to submit their complaints/ compensation claims by June 5. According to an announcement of NAB Rawalpindi, the Bureau was conducting investigations against Messers Geo Masters (Pvt), Geo Masters, International and others, the management of four illegal housing schemes including Safari Enclave II Adyala Road, Rawalpindi; Safari Green Farm Houses, Adyala Road, Rawalpindi; Safari View Residential, Khayaban-e-Tanvir, Rawalpindi and Safari Royal Villas, Khayaban-e-Tanvir, Rawalpindi on the allegations of receiving money from the people by fraudulent means by promising them plots in aforementioned housing schemes. The applications of complainants and compensation claims should be submitted to Investigation Officer, (IW-II), NAB, Rawalpindi, Civic Centre, G-6, Melody, Islamabad during office hours. The applications along with supporting documents including a copy of Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC), original documents, payment receipts of the looted money, affidavit should be submitted to Director General, NAB, Rawalpindi during office hours by post or email: rawalpindi@nab.gov.pk. - APP

Teachers welcome ombudsman's decision

ISLAMABAD: The teachers of the federal government colleges have welcomed the decision of Federal Ombudsman on rent assessment of residential buildings as per entitlement. According to an official source, a complainant and a lecturer at Islamabad Model Postgraduate College H-8, Mr. Shahid Nadeem got relief from the office of Federal Ombudsman as the rent of his house assessed by the authorities was below his entitlement. The rent assessment committee of Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MOFEPT) assessed the rent of his house at Rs. 30,000 while the rental ceiling of the lecturer was Rs. 41147. "We, the office bearers of FGCTA, tried our best to convince the authorities that the teacher was being deprived of his genuine right but all of our efforts were to no avail. - APP

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Briefs

Govt wants 3 connectivity projects in the next JCC

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Government plans to include three mega connectivity projects during the upcoming meeting of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), according to a report published by Gwadar Pro. The three projects include Mansehra-Muzaffarabad Expressway, Babusar Tunnel, and Zhob-D.I. Khan Highway. "There three projects should be taken up on priority for inclusion in the upcoming JCC," Minister of Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal ordered authorities concerned.

He was chairing a preparatory meeting on a joint working group (JWG) on Transport Infrastructure, which was attended by officials from CPEC Authority, National Highway Authority (NHA), Gwadar Port Authority, and Pakistan Railways. Last month, NHA recommended PC-1 for the construction of Mansehra-Muzaffarabad (a link of CPEC) to Executive Committee of National Economic Council (CNEC) for consideration. The estimated cost of the project is Rs. 44.72 billion. Zhob-D.I. Khan (N-50) Phase one is another project which, according to Ahsan Iqbal, would be recommended during the upcoming JCC meeting. Under the project, the current 210 km long 2-lane road would be improved and upgraded to four lanes. PC-1 of the project was approved by EC-NEC in 2017.

CSC celebrates Anniversary of Sino-Pak relationship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China Study Center (CSC), University of Peshawar (UoP), in collaboration with Pakistan China Friendship Association (KPC), organized a seminar themed "Celebrating 71st Anniversary of Pakistan China Diplomatic Relations 1951-2022" at the CSC conference hall, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday.

The seminar was attended by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Director China Study Center, UoP, Prof. Dr. Zahid Anwar, Secretary-general of Pakistan China Friendship Association (KPC) Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani and officials from different departments of the University.

Addressing the seminar, Prof. Dr. Zahid Anwar said that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is forming its economic model through cooperation in infrastructure development, energy, science and technology, agriculture, and more importantly social-economic development.

Dr. Saima, Department of International Relations, said that Pakistan's location strategically is very important. Pakistan and China are sharing the concept of development and progress and the bilateral relationship is based on mutual trust and win-win cooperation.

Dr. Kashif Saeed, Department of Economics, talked about China Pakistan diplomatic relations and said the special economic zones (SEZs) in Pakistan under CPEC can change the destiny of Pakistan.

Police conducted raid on marriage party

RAWALPINDI: Police have conducted a raid at a marriage party for arranging dance and recovered sound system, fireworks and other related equipment, besides arresting 11 involved in violation of marriage laws. Dharmyal police carried out raid and arrested those were identified as Jamil, Dilawar, Khadim, Sameer, Shaguffa, Fauzia, Arif, Iqra, Anmol, Saba and Hina. Police have registered separate case against all of them and further investigation was in progress. SP Sadder appreciated the performance of police team and said that operations against law-breaking elements would be continued. - APP

Experts urge political cool down, fresh elections

Devcom-Pakistan webinar suggests many solutions to Pakistan's contemporary threats including balanced foreign policy, rationalized consumption and renewable energy solutions

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at the Devcom-Pakistan webinar opined that multiple threats are confronting Pakistan at this historic juncture. The country is at the verge of collapse due to all accumulated domestic and international geopolitical blunders. All stakeholders are guilty of this chaos, crisis and clash of vested interests. National interest seems absolutely compromised. Sanity shall prevail to consolidate real-time solutions to combat internal and external threats ranging from geopolitical to national leadership crisis, socioeconomic failures and nontraditional security challenges. The well-known geostrategic affairs experts suggested that the controversial figureheads in the political arena and in the state institutions shall remain silent for a while. A national economic revival commission shall be formed. The commission shall have indigenous, noncontroversial and nonpolitical technocrats. It should be formed by the state institutions through

a consultative process. Let the politicians sit together to work sanely.

Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) organized the webinar on the subject "Contemporary Threats to Pakistan" on Saturday. The guest speakers included Lt. General retired Talat Masood, senior journalist Mazhar Abbas, Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade chief Hassan Daud Butt. Research analyst Farhat Rana, China trade expert Khalid Mahmood, geopolitical analyst from London Muhammad Nawaz Raja, International Relations expert Sadiq Hussain, also senior financial expert Iftikhar Ahmed also spoke on the occasion.

Lt. General retired Talat Masood urged the large political parties to act sanely and resolve their conflicts and reservations in the parliament. We shall not postpone the moment of truth at this critical moment rather face it rationally. Pakistan needs to improve its security situation while balancing out its geopolitical positioning. We cannot undermine the bilateral rela-

tions with one or more countries to have preferred relations with another one. Domestic solidarity and political consensus is very important for pitching ourselves in the geopolitical scenarios.

Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed urged the military establishment to play its role in wiping off the politico-economic chaos in the best possible manner. Political tolerance and reconciliation is extremely important in the heated up political environment. It is adding to national economic fiasco and vulnerability to the geopolitical situations around us. We shall form a national economic revival commission having in the independent economic and financial experts to immediately review the situation and suggest an action plan for implementation through the government of technocrats, strongly supported by the establishment. Senior journalist Mazhar Abbas said: Politicians need to resolve their conflicts within the parliament, not in the courts. We would not have three more martial laws if the judiciary had not validated

Ayub's martial law. It's the judiciary that has played havoc with the systems in Pakistan, and encouraged the undemocratic forces and dictatorial regimes. Political consensus on fresh elections, depolarization and cooling down the political hatred would lead to a stable political situation at the moment.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade chief executive Dr. Hassan Daud Butt highlighted the need to explore local natural endowment including human resource, and embrace the concept of glocalization. He emphasized that we must start to trust local experts and start living within our means. The regional integration and globalization is coming under stress because of the COVID 19 and also the Ukraine crisis. However, CPEC still remains a great opportunity to address our economic issues. A practical ease of doing business (EODB) must be implemented to attract investment. He stated Rashakai Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is progressing well while the diaspora is taking keen interest in light manufacturing, food and tourism sectors.

'Kashmiris fighting for survival of Muslim Ummah'

ISLAMABAD: Speakers have urged the participants of the International Jurist Conference to intensify their efforts to increase international diplomatic pressure on the Modi government to stop the genocide of Kashmiris.

According to Kashmir Media Service (KMS), scholars from 42 Islamic countries attended the conference and expressed the hope that concrete steps would be taken at the public and governmental levels on the issues facing Muslims, including Kashmir and Palestine.

Referring to Kashmir, the speaker comprising Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai, Raja Khalid Mahmood, Nasir Qadri Advocate and Dr Waleed said Kashmiris are fighting not only for their freedom but also for the protection and survival of the entire Muslim Ummah.

The speakers said that apart from Kashmiri and Indian Muslims, the entire Islamic world is on Narendra Modi's anti-Muslim agenda on which he has the support of global colonialism, including Israel. India wants to destroy Kashmir's Muslim identity and eliminate Hurriyat leadership.

They deplored that veteran Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Gilani remained under house arrest for more than ten years and died due to unavailability of medical treatment.

Gilani's body was desecrated and his children and close relatives were also barred from attending his funeral, they said, adding the same treatment was meted out to his companion Ashraf Sahrai, whose body was taken out of jail and buried in the dark of night.

The speakers said now India is preparing to execute another frontline Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik in a false case without a fair trial. - APP



RAWALPINDI: President RCCI Nadeem Rauf presenting a bouquet to Bangladesh High Commissioner during Gems and Jewelry Exhibition. - DNA

Noor Alam Khan to be new PAC Chairman

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Following the resignation by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) member of the National Assembly (MNA) Rana Tanveer Hussain as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairman, the government has decided to appoint Noor Alam Khan, a dissident Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) MNA as the committee chairman.

On the other hand, Wajih Qamar will also be made part of the PAC. MNA Noor will take charge of his office day after tomorrow (Monday). In yet another development, the PTI has boycotted the formation of a parliamentary committee to be formed to draft the electoral reforms.

Sources said that despite having representation in the Senate, the party had refused to forward names of its senators to the chairman for the committee.

The government, on the other hand, has decided to go ahead with the formation of the body without the PTI. The NA speaker is expected to form the committee by next week.

Locally assembled Chinese mobiles gain foothold

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Locally assembled Chinese mobiles and vehicles have gained a foothold in Pakistan's car and mobile phone markets. The ban on importing vehicles and phones will further increase the manufacture of Chinese cars and cell-phones locally and will help the Government of Shehbaz Sharif to save the country's foreign reserves, says a report published by Gwadar

Pro on Saturday. The Government of Pakistan has decided to ban the imports of luxury items to save the country's precious "foreign exchange". Expensive cars and smartphones are amongst the items imported from abroad, shrinking foreign exchange.

However, according to the report, Chinese companies have recently started manufacturing high-end mobile phones and luxury cars in Pakistan that will somehow meet the demands of the

people. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif tweeted on Thursday that "My decision to ban import of luxury items will save the country precious foreign exchange. We will practice austerity & financially stronger people must lead in this effort so that the less privileged among us do not have to bear this burden inflicted on them by the PTI Govt". Chinese top mobile companies have started manufacturing mobile phones in Pakistan.

Chinese energy equipment provider appears at Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Chinese new energy equipment provider appeared at the Solar Energy Meet (ISEM) exhibition this week, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Saturday. The ISEM was held at the Lahore Expo Centre in Pakistan. PROJJOY Electric Co., Ltd., the first Chinese company focusing on providing DC isolation switches, miniature circuit breakers, DC surge protector, rapid shutdown, and smart electricity meters for the field of optical energy storage system, participated in the exhibition in collaboration with local partners, which was also the first official appearance of Projjoy in Pakistan.

ISEM includes two sections, exhibition and summit, providing an ideal communication platform for participants and attendees, where industry experts, manufacturers, users, etc. gather to have a dialogue, share their knowledge, discuss current challenges and business opportunities, formulate market strategies, and jointly explore solutions to shape the future of the solar industry. A Projjoy manager told Gwadar Pro in an interview that in this exhibition, Projjoy exhibited classic products such as miniature circuit breaker, electrical box, surge protector, etc., especially non-polarized miniature circuit breakers that have attracted customer attention.

Pakistan is located in the tropics and has the excellent light condition, with eight to nine hours of sunshine per day, which means ideal climatic conditions for solar power generation. Moreover, Pakistan is the fifth most populous country in the world and has a huge demand for electricity. Besides, Pakistan has strong policy support for the development of clean energy, and Pakistan promised at the Leaders' Climate Summit that by 2030, clean energy use will account for 60 percent.

Therefore, the new energy industry, which is still in its infancy in Pakistan, has a great potential for development. It is estimated that by 2030, Pakistan's photovoltaic installed capacity will reach 12.8GW, and by 2047 this figure will reach 26.9GW, providing a broad market for the development of the PV industry. "The development of solar and wind power generation will enhance Pakistan's security of electricity supply and put Pakistan at the forefront of the global energy transition," emphasized Najy Benhassine, the Country Director for Pakistan for the South Asia region at the WB. Entering the Pakistani market, Projjoy will provide customers with quality products and services to help local PV projects achieve safe, stable and efficient operation. - DNA

Police to take stern action against LEDs, high beam lights

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has decided to take strict action against those involved in using high beam lights and Light-Emitting Diodes (LED) during drive. Acting Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Majid Iqbal said decision has been made to ensure safe road environment in the city and avoid accidents. A Several vehicles had to face action during the drive having HID/LED lights while such lights were also impounded. Special squads have been constituted to check use of LED/HID by motorists while police pickets would be erected at important boulevards of the city including Expressway, Srinagar highway (Kashmir Highway), Margalla Road, IJP road, Murree Road, 7th Avenue and 9th avenue.

China granted over RMB 5b for Gwadar's projects

"NGIA will have the longest runway, 3.78 km, in the region, equipped with a capacity to handle the largest aircraft. The tourism sector will inevitably boom," Mr. Zhang said

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China had granted more than 5 billion RMB in Gwadar for several socio-economic projects during the last 7 years to upgrade the living conditions of the local people of Gwadar under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro. The grant is dedicated to New Gwadar International Airport (NGIA), East Bay Expressway, 300-bed China-Pakistan Friendship Hospital, China-Pakistan Vocational and Technical Training Institute, China-Pakistan Gwadar Faqeer Middle School, China-Pakistan Fraternity Emergency Center, and the 1.2 MGD desalination plant so far. This was revealed by Chair-

man of China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC) Zhang Baozhong during a two-day conference on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives in Gwadar.

"NGIA will have the longest runway, 3.78 km, in the region, equipped with a capacity to handle the largest aircraft. The tourism sector will inevitably boom," Mr. Zhang said. With its operationalization, new resorts will be established attracting many tourists from China and other countries, he added. While delivering the keynote speech, Chairman COPHC spoke at length about the experiences of his 7 years' stay in Gwadar. "We are cognizant of the fact that Gwadar deserves more rapid development to live up to the expectations of the local people. There

is no denying the fact that it has developed much during the past 7 years", he remarked. He stated three reasons for the promising prospects of Gwadar: the cooperation of the Gwadar people, its vast resources, and its strategic location. "The inhabitants of Gwadar deserve respect and development", Mr. Zhang added. Mr. Zhang made it clear that Gwadar port is fully functional. Some problems do exist like logistics and lack of market demand, however, development is an evolutionary process and Gwadar is on its way towards industrialization, he mentioned.

After the completion of M8, he said, cargos will be able to reach Lahore and other major cities, reducing the distance significantly. "4 new Chinese investors

are coming to Gwadar to explore opportunities and investment potentials in the refinery, textile, petrochemical and agricultural sectors," acclaimed the chairman. COPHC is one of the major players in Gwadar and has undertaken remarkable steps in Gwadar's development. "Gwadar is my second home and we are ready to collaborate with local community in educational development. We can offer exchange programs for the students and academics of Gwadar. Through the scientific research laboratory we will impart sophisticated know-how to the local youth", Mr. Zhang pronounced. It has been observed that for the pursuit of a clean and green Gwadar, more than 50,000 plants were planted, predominantly spearheaded by COPHC.



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Looming food crisis

Humanity is staring at a food crisis like never before. That's why world leaders are scrambling to head off a catastrophe with two meetings at the United Nations, aiming to lay out an action plan.

Food insecurity is not new. It has been a reality for the poor in low-income and developing countries since conflicts, adverse climate patterns and the rising cost of fertilisers impact food production and supply. The Covid-19 pandemic made a bad situation worse, and the Russia-Ukraine war pushed the world into a hunger crisis.

The warring nations account for 30 per cent of the world's wheat and barley production, while Ukraine also produces 15 per cent of corn on Earth and takes care of half the sunflower oil requirements globally. The conflict has unhinged the world food supply chain and crippled the food imports of 36 countries, including some of the poorest.

There was a sliver of hope when India vowed to release wheat stocks on the world market. But New Delhi soon announced an export ban after the heatwaves hampered domestic crop production and pushed prices higher.

Before the Ukraine war, a record 193 million people went hungry in 2021, a jump of almost 40 million over the previous year, according to the 2022 Global Report on Food Crises.

UN projections expect 232 million people to starve in 81 nations where it runs the World Food Programme, a steep increase of 47 million. The grim statistics are a stain on the world since the quantum jump in technology and agricultural practices should have helped provide ample reserves.

But the reality is different. World food markets are highly concentrated: 86 per cent of wheat exports come from seven countries, and 68 per cent of the world's wheat reserves are held in three countries. That means any supply disruption, like a conflict, can have devastating consequences. The food crisis is a wake-up call. The world should rally to put in place mechanisms to prevent the disruption of the food supply. That includes changes in agricultural and energy policies to empower small scale producers, besides improving distribution systems.

Sustained funding too is required to prevent and respond to food insecurity. Or else, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres' warning that malnutrition, mass hunger and famine could last for years will become an unwelcome reality.



Growing crisis in Sri Lanka

There is not a country that has escaped the combined economic shocks of Covid-19 and the global spike in oil and food prices triggered by Russia's continuing invasion of Ukraine. Painful for wealthy countries, for low- to middle-income countries it risks being existential. Sri Lanka – mired in crisis – last week defaulted on its debt for the first time in its history.

The situation facing Sri Lanka's citizens is dire. Soaring inflation has taken the price of basic goods out of reach for many, and extreme shortages of food, medicine and fuel mean people have to spend hours queuing in the extreme heat while shops have been forced to close. For months, there have been peaceful anti-government protests, driven by anger with the political elite. But in recent weeks, they have turned violent; one politician has been killed by a mob, and others have had their houses set alight.

There are other countries where political turmoil and economic vulnerabilities mean that further economic shocks will lead to more hardship for their populations, with the risk of triggering instability and violence. Global food prices rose by more than 30% in 2021, and the war in Ukraine pushed up wheat and maize prices by almost 20% in the course of just one month this year. The economic impact of Covid, already bad, is far from over: lockdowns in Chinese cities such as Shanghai and Shenzhen have disrupted supply chains worldwide.

Russia's aggression in Ukraine has reawakened western commitment to the Nato alliance as a way of promoting global security. But that is not enough: wealthy countries such as the US and the UK need to be alive to the impact of these global economic trends on lower- and middle-income countries, not just because they have a moral duty to do more to alleviate global poverty, but also out of self-interest with a view to security risks. Instead, the chancellor, Rishi Sunak, has cut £4.2bn from the British aid budget, breaking the Conservative manifesto pledge to keep aid spending at 0.7% of gross national income.

Western retreat from international aid will leave more room for China to fill the gap. Lending to countries such as Sri Lanka through its "belt and road" infrastructure programme is a key part of China's strategy to increase its soft power. In a world of increasing economic insecurity, Britain's cuts to international aid are not just immoral, but short-sighted in the extreme.

George W Bush is not funny

Belen Fernandez

The Correspondents' Dinner has also played host to other bouts of presidential humour that wasn't – including in 2010 when then-president Barack Obama undertook to announce that members of the Jonas Brothers band were in attendance at the venue and that his daughters Sasha and Malia were "huge fans"

Everyone has by now heard about the latest gaffe by former United States president and unconvicted war criminal George W Bush, father of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq and other fantastically bloody escapades.

In a recent speech at his very own George W Bush Presidential Centre in Dallas, Texas, Bush condemned the "absence of checks and balances" in Vladimir Putin's Russia, which had enabled "one man to launch a wholly unjustified and brutal invasion of Iraq". Quickly realising his not-really-mistake, Bush corrected himself: "I mean, of Ukraine" – but added slightly under his breath: "Iraq, too, anyway". The spectacle elicited gleeful laughter from the audience, as did Bush's subsequent attribution of the Iraq-Ukraine mix-up to his age: "Seventy-five". Granted, the linguistically challenged ex-head of state has long made people chuckle with his so-called "Bushisms", which have over the years included the following peculiar utterances: "I know how hard it is for you to put food on your family"; "I know the human being and fish can coexist peacefully"; "They misestimated me"; and "Rarely is the question asked: Is our children learning?" But the effective annihilation of a nation is hardly a laughing matter. Ditto

for the reduction to a split-second "Iraq, too, anyway" of hundreds of thousands of deaths, countless massacres of Iraqi civilians, the forcible displacement of millions of people, and the saturation of the country with toxic and radioactive munitions that continue to cause congenital birth defects, cancer, and all manner of other maladies nearly two decades after the launch of the "wholly unjustified and brutal invasion".

One can imagine the horror that would ensue were a nonwhite non-Westerner to crack a joke about, say, the September 11 attacks, or some other event piling in comparison – in terms of human and material destruction – to the war on Iraq. Bush and his audience, on the other hand, are by virtue of imperial entitlement permitted to snicker at a reference to the mass slaughter of nonwhite non-Westerners as though it were merely an instance of self-deprecating humour on the part of the former imperial commander-in-chief.

Of course, this is not the first time Bush has unintentionally said something deeply revealing about his own belligerence. There was that time in 2006, for example, when he remarked in an interview with CBS Evening News: "You know, one of the hardest parts of my job is to connect Iraq to the war on terror". Nor, it so happens, is it the first time that he has joked about the whole premise of the Iraq war. Back in 2004, during the annual cringe-fest known as the White House Correspondents' Dinner, Bush narrated a slide show featuring a picture of him looking under furniture in the Oval Office: "Those weapons of mass destruction have got to be here somewhere", he quipped to applause and laughter. This, mind you, was just one year after the launch of a war that was supposedly meant to save the world from the apocalyptic threat of Iraq's alleged WMD arsenal. In an April 2004 dispatch for The Nation, titled Laughing With Bush, David Corn – then the magazine's Washington editor – called out the president for his Correspondents' Dinner "performance" and the attendees for their ingratiating response. In front of an "audience of people who suppos-

edly spend their days pursuing the truth", Corn wrote, "Bush joked about misstatements (if not lies) he had used to persuade (if not hornswoogle) the American people and the media".

In other words, the entire situation was itself a joke – albeit not at all funny.

The Correspondents' Dinner has also played host to other bouts of presidential humour-that-wasn't – including in 2010 when then-president Barack Obama undertook to announce that members of the Jonas Brothers band were in attendance at the venue and that his daughters Sasha and Malia were "huge fans".

Never mind that US military drones were then, as now, notoriously associated with the indiscriminate killing of civilians in various foreign lands. In the end, these presidential punchlines achieve the sort of barbarity disguised as banality that reflexively tickles America's funny bone.

US allies, too, share a similar sense of humour and would-be wit – not to mention microphone issues. In July 2006, during the G8 conference in none other than Russia, an unattended microphone captured the banter between Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, his faithful accomplice in the quest to obliterate Iraq.

It was less than a week into the latest effort by Israel – another imperial accomplice – to obliterate Lebanon via a 34-day bombing campaign that ultimately killed some 1,200 people, mainly civilians. Bush addressed his counterpart as: "Yo, Blair", and, according to the transcript of the chat on the BBC website, the pair had a good laugh over the important matter of a sweater Blair had gifted Bush: Bush: "I know you picked it out yourself." Blair: "Oh absolutely – in fact, I knitted it!"

The duo then proceeded to discuss the bloodshed in Lebanon, which in Bush's view could be resolved not by getting Israel to stop massacring people but rather by getting Lebanon's Hezbollah organisation – which, logically, was fighting back – "to stop doing this s***".

Fast forward to the 2022 Iraq-I-mean-Ukraine gaffe at the George W Bush Presidential Centre in Dallas – the "wholly unjustified and brutal" decimation of a country condensed into a single imperial wisecrack – and one finds oneself wishing that it would all just stop.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Palestine's voice will never be silenced

M Muhannad Ayyash



Despite all these efforts at erasure, despite all the death, suffering, and destruction that the Israeli state has unleashed on the Palestinian people, the reality is that Palestinians will not be erased

I managed to overcome my fears in difficult times because I have chosen journalism in order to be close to the people. It might not be easy to change the reality but at least I was able to convey the people's message and voice." These are Shireen Abu Akleh's words in an Al Jazeera video montage. Over her exceptional and courageous career, Shireen told the stories of Palestinians. She spoke with the people, to the people, for the people. One can easily see her closeness to the people in the overwhelming show of support on Palestinian streets the day she was murdered.

In an especially moving account, a Palestinian woman from the Jenin refugee camp recounted how Shireen bravely covered the Israeli attacks on Jenin over twenty years ago without any breaks or care for her well-being, and how she personally helped this woman search for her children in the chaos and terror of the Israeli onslaught on the camp. This type of closeness to the needs and aspirations of the people is what has always scared the Israeli settler colonial state. Like all colonial and settler colonial forms of power, Israel seeks to weaken the colonised society that it dominates. Ingrained into the foundation of Israeli politics and policies is the desire to destabilise Palestinian politics, and create fissures and chaos within Palestinian society, all for the sake of separating the people from any form of self-governance and popular sovereignty.

This is why the Israeli state worked so hard to eliminate the popular committees that sprang up across Palestine during the first Intifada, and which indeed created the Intifada. These committees were a direct expression of the people's will and effectively presented an apparatus of governance that challenged and functioned against the Israeli settler colonial apparatus of power. In other words, these committees were democratic in the most substantive and meaningful sense of the term. And that panicked Israel, and showed that the so-called democracy in the Middle East is in fact terrified of a real substantive democracy – one that is truly and materially of the people, for the people. In its effort to weaken the people, concealing and eradicating the truth of their subjugation and colonisation is a critical part of Israel's arsenal of weaponry. Shireen's voice was attentive to the feelings and sentiments of the people. Her reporting gave Palestinians an outlet where they heard a direct expression of the realities of their colonised lives and their aspirations for freedom and dignity. In a world saturated with their silencing and erasure, the Palestinian people find solace and encouragement in the few spaces that assert definitively, forcefully, and honestly their basic truth: that they are simply yearning for a

de-colonial life. This is the truth that Israel is at war with and has been for decades. Part of this war effort is Israel's targeting of Palestinian journalists who speak with and for the people. The Palestinian Journalists Syndicate estimates that "86 Palestinian journalists have been killed since 1967" and "an estimated 50 Palestinian journalists have been killed since 2000." This doesn't even include the great number of journalists who are continuously imprisoned, harassed, and injured by Israeli forces. Any other country in the world, and there would be no debate about the existence of a clear pattern of the intentional killing, censorship, and intimidation of journalists. But for the Euro-American imperial hegemony that made the creation of Israel as a settler colony possible and sustainable, the war on truth and truth tellers as part of the settler colonial project is par for the course.

The Israeli state and its lobby groups are of course already using their normal propaganda to hide and conceal this latest crime. Misdirecting and feeble talking points suggesting "Palestinian militants killed her in the crossfire," "Israeli forces were simply defending themselves from Palestinian terror," and so on, were immediately peddled. Israel's Euro-American media allies, with some exceptions, have predictably joined the chorus. The New York Times, CNN, CBC, and many others neither named the killers nor the crime in their headlines, and presented the story in their normal "one side says this, the other side says that, and who knows where the truth is" drive. This lazy journalism at best, propagandistic whitewashing in reality, would be laughable if it was not so serious and deadly in its consequences. The so-called journalists who write and approve these headlines and stories at these allegedly prestigious news outlets cannot and will never hold a candle to the noble and true journalism of Shireen. Just one of her reports is worth all the ink that these hacks have wasted writing Palestine out of history and erasing and concealing the truth of the Palestinian people. The Israeli state has no substantive credibility. This is the same state that raided Shireen's home the same day they killed her. They murdered her in the morning, and in the afternoon stormed her home where her family had gathered, where friends and community members were visiting to pay their respects. Apparently, the popular nationalist music and Palestinian flags were too upsetting for the gentle ears and eyes of the Israeli police. Let that sink in. On yet another day of uninhibited Israeli violence where in addition to Shireen, they killed sixteen-year-old Thaer Khalil Mohammad Maslat in el-Bireh, the Israeli grievance is this: Palestinians who were mourning the cold-blooded murder of one of their cherished voices were too loud and proud in affirming their connection to their homeland and aspirations for freedom and justice.

For the Israeli state, the colonised people that they kill and maim with impunity should not even be allowed to mourn as they wish. They should simply accept their fate, quietly and calmly, and cease to exist as human beings who call themselves Palestinians and their homeland Palestine. There is no such thing as "Israeli justice". There has never been justice for colonised Palestinians in Israeli courts and political institutions, only punishing and eliminatory settler colonial laws and policies. Justice and healing for the Palestinians will take decades to arrive. There has just been too much killing, maiming, and destruction. It will take many years of work towards justice and reconciliation to heal a brutalised people. But we're not even on that road yet. We are still in the thick of an ongoing crime. That road can only begin to emerge when the international community is forced, by people power across the world, to boycott, divest, and sanction Israel, not "after this investigation", but now.

So, spare me any talk about journalistic standards, a commitment to anti-racism and decolonisation, promotion of democracy, freedom, and justice unless you stand with Palestine. Simply put, one cannot be on the side of truth, justice, freedom, democracy, anti-racism, and decolonisation unless one actively joins the Palestinian struggle for de-colonial liberation.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

TBTTP must not be destroyed

Mumtaz Ahmad Bhatti



The PML-N government should continue all projects of national interest including TBTTP. Projects of national importance should not be politicized. If the best projects are closed due to political revenge, it will be a national loss

No attention has been paid to maximizing forest cover, maintenance and protection of forests. The forest department has always been neglected by the governments. During the PML-N regime, Mian Nawaz Sharif started planting in the name of Green Pakistan all over Pakistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. When the PTI government was formed in KP, the Billion Trees Tsunami Project was started in KP on the orders of Imran Khan. The Billion Trees project worked faster than Green Pakistan. When Imran Khan became the Prime Minister, the Billion Trees project

was successfully completed. Encouraged by the success of the Billion Trees Project in KP, Imran Khan announced a major project called the Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Project in all four provinces, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Fifty percent of the funds in all four provinces were from the federal government and fifty percent from the provinces while Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are being given 100 percent funds from the federal government. Many times the Forest Departments also face shortages of funds. Despite all the difficulties, the forest departments continued to work hard for the success of TBTTP. Now TBTTP is being praised all over the world. Imran Khan as Prime Minister paid special attention to TBTTP. Now, after the success of No Confidence, MianShahbaz Sharif has become the Prime Minister. The PML-N government, being in opposition, was very critical of the TBTTP. PML-N leaders believe that there is a lot of corruption in this project. Negative thinking of PML-N and other opposition parties regarding this project is not correct.

I wrote many articles on TBTTP, visited and saw plantations in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and all four provinces several times. Kotli, Rawlakot, Bagh, areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir have very beautiful plantations and the survival rate is also very good. Sundarani Forest has been named as Reserve Forest, which falls in GhotkiTaluka, Ghotki District, with a total area of 2251 acres, which is under the administrative control of Divisional Forest Officer, Forest Station Division Sukkur, north of Indus River. The entire area of the Sundarani forest was under encroachment and has been cleared of encroachments / forest land grabbers and the "Green Pakistan Program - Restoration of For-

est Resources in Pakistan" (Ten Billion Tree Tsunami) Tree planting has been done under the title development scheme. Program) Now the total area of Sundarani forest is under tree cover and stored area. Much better work has been done throughout Sindh with regard to the Ten Billion Tsunami Project. In Sindh, full attention has been paid to local species. Seeing the beautiful forests of Kekar, Sundarani Forest is one of the beautiful forests of Pakistan. Hosh Mohammad Shar, Divisional Forest Officer, Forest Division, Sukkur said that it is important to plant trees but even more important is to protect the planted plants. After 1927, Deodar has been planted in Murree.beri trees has been planted in Sargodha Circle. Plantation of eucalyptus in the Northern Zone has been discouraged and local varieties have been planted. Due to the struggle of CCF Northern Zone Shahid Rashid Awan local varieties of trees were given priority, otherwise more and more eucalyptus plants were being planted earlier. According to sources, the PML-N government wanted to take political revenge on PTI through this project. In the midst of their revenge, punishment will be meted out to those forest officers who worked hard day and night for the success of this project.

The Ministry of Climate Change should avoid people who are spreading false information against TBTTP. If the Ministry receives a complaint of corruption against a forest officer, it should be investigated first and irrefutable evidence should be collected instead of immediate action and media trial. If any fault is found then action should be taken against it otherwise forest officers should be allowed to work. There are many professional complainants in our society who make false applications for personal gain. Officers dealing with false complaints suffer mental anguish and waste their time in futile inquiries. The PML-N government should continue all projects of national interest including TBTTP. Projects of national importance should not be politicized. If the best projects are closed due to political revenge, it will be a national loss.

Briefs

Pak, China...

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two sides agreed that amidst profound regional and international changes, the importance of China-Pakistan strategic relations has assumed even greater significance. As All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partners, China and Pakistan share inroad mutual trust and friendship, which is a source of peace, stability, and prosperity for the region and beyond. Both sides reaffirmed their strong support for each other's core interests and major concerns, and commitment to deepening strategic communication including at the highest political level and practical cooperation, and building an even stronger China-Pakistan Community with a Shared Future in the New Era. The two sides noted with satisfaction the steady growth of economic cooperation between China and Pakistan. In this context, they agreed that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has effectively improved Pakistan's infrastructure and boosted its socio-economic development. Both sides expressed firm resolve to synergizing development strategies, pushing forward all CPEC projects in a safe, smooth, and high-quality manner, promoting cooperation in areas such as economy and trade, investment, industry, agriculture, health, and science and technology, contributing to the peoples' well-being and delivering greater benefits to local communities.

FM Bilawal...

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investments, industrialisation and CPEC cooperation. Issues facing students also discussed," he said, adding that both sides were committed to elevating the multi-faceted partnership to greater heights. Earlier in the day, the Pakistan embassy in China shared some pictures of Wang showing Bilawal a photo album depicting Pakistan-China bilateral ties. It also shared photographs of the two foreign ministers cutting a cake commemorating 71 years since the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries. On Saturday, the foreign minister said his visit coincided with the 71st anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan's diplomatic ties with China.

Kaira...

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detention in Tihar Jail for last many years. Now the Indian authorities have convicted Yaseen Malik in a fake trail where he had no chances of a fair hearing, he said. Yaseen Malik didn't engage any lawyer in defence of baseless charges against him, he added. Qamar Zaman Kaira said that each state department of so called secular India is today following the unfortunate ideology of RSS in form of Hindutva. He called upon the international community, international human rights organisations especially Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International to take partial steps to stop India from carrying out this unjustified and unilateral trail against Yaseen Malik. He reminded the world community that Indian had already committed the judicial murders of Kashmiri leaders Afzal Guru and Maqbool Bhatt in past.

Pak, China...

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his engagements and visited the Chinese Consulate. She said the PM restored security mechanisms to thwart the dastardly attempts to sabotage Pak-China relations. Mariyum Aurangzeb said that there were many ongoing and upcoming projects which manifested this ideal and the everlasting friendship between the two nations. She extended her hearty congratulations to the people and government of China on this historic day. The minister also cut the cake for the anniversary. Deputy Chief of Mission Ms. Pang Chunxue of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan also spoke on the occasion. Federal Secretary Information and Broadcasting Shahera Shahid were also present on the occasion.



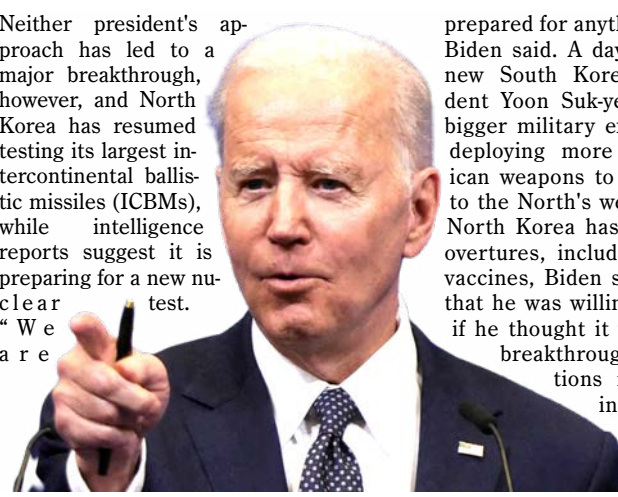
ISLAMABAD: Players of Rising Stars Hockey Club posing for a picture ahead of their match during the Chief of the Army Staff Inter Club Hockey Tournament. – DNA

Biden says 'hello' to North Korea's Kim amid tensions

AGENCIES

SEOUL: US President Joe Biden, in Seoul before heading to Japan as part of his first Asia trip as president, had a simple message for North Korea's Kim Jong Un: "Hello... period," he told reporters on the last day of his visit to South Korea on Sunday. Biden said he was "not concerned" about new North Korean nuclear tests, which would be the first in nearly five years. But his wry response when asked what message he had for Kim underscored the administration's low-key approach to the unresolved tensions with North Korea. It is a stark contrast with former President Donald Trump's showy threats, summits, and "love letters" with Kim.

Neither president's approach has led to a major breakthrough, however, and North Korea has resumed testing its largest intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), while intelligence reports suggest it is preparing for a new nuclear test.



prepared for anything North Korea does," Biden said. A day earlier, Biden and his new South Korean counterpart, President Yoon Suk-yeol, agreed to consider bigger military exercises and potentially deploying more nuclear-capable American weapons to the region in response to the North's weapons tests. read more North Korea has not responded to U.S. overtures, including offers of COVID-19 vaccines, Biden said on Saturday, noting that he was willing to sit down with Kim if he thought it would lead to a serious breakthrough. COVID-19 restrictions may be playing a role in North Korea's lack of response, a senior U.S. administration official said.

North Korea has said the U.S. overtures are insincere because Washington maintains "hostile policies" such as military drills and sanctions. When asked whether Biden was willing to take concrete steps to break the stalemate, the official said that the administration was looking for serious engagement, not grand gestures. "This is a decision that only the DPRK can make," the official said, using the initials of North Korea's official name. At a U.S. air base south of Seoul, Biden and Yoon toured an air operations centre. American and South Korean troops, behind large computer projectors showing maps of the border separating North and South Korea, are tasked with defending against any missiles the North might launch. Yoon said such facilities are important given "increasing" threats from North Korea.

Tai turns tables to win Thai Open

SPORTS DESK

BANGKOK: Badminton's world number two Tai Tzu-ying exacted revenge against Olympic champion Chen Yufei on Sunday by winning the Thailand Open women's singles title in a rematch of their final in Tokyo. The Taiwanese 27-year-old, who lost last year's Thailand Open final to Spain's Carolina Marin, got off to a fast start against the Chinese world number four and eventually sealed the win 21-15, 17-21, 21-12. She sped into a nine-point lead in the first game but Chen, who was part of a Chinese team narrowly defeated by South Korea in last week's Uber Cup in Bangkok, clawed her way back to take the second game and force a decider. Tai then quickly opened up a seven-point lead in the final game and rode the momentum to claim victory. In the men's final, match favourite and world number six Lee Zii Jia survived an unexpected scare at the hands of Chinese rookie Li Shifeng, ranked 49th in the world. A shaky Lee man-

aged to come from behind to win 17-21, 21-11, 23-21 in a match lasting 70 minutes. The 24-year-old Malaysian showed aggression and high energy in the opener but the burden of expectations got the better of him as Li seized the first game. Lee - who won the Badminton Asia Championships in Manila this month - steadied himself in the second and raced to a six-point lead at the break before equalising the score. In the last game, a nervous Lee overplayed some shots while Li proved lethal in attack and carved out a seven-point advantage at the interval. Power smashes and fancy footwork helped Lee narrow the gap, levelling the score at 19 all. But a sloppy long shot gave Li match point, which Lee managed to save. The encounter came to a climax as Lee then squandered his own match point, before coming up trumps on his second opportunity to secure the final game 23-21. After hitting the winning shot, Lee sank to his knees in elation, before throwing his shirt and racket into the crowd.

Mbappe in position of power at PSG after agreeing to new deal

FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: Kylian Mbappe's decision to stay at Paris Saint-Germain confirms the Qatar-backed club's position of power within European football but also means the superstar striker is likely to wield huge influence as they rebuild for another assault on the Champions League. The 23-year-old had for so long seemed certain to sign for Real Madrid before being persuaded to commit to a new three-year deal at PSG, the club he joined in 2017 from Monaco. His new salary is set to be even more eye-watering than before and accompanied by an astronomical signing-on fee: there were reports that Real's own offer included a signing-on fee of 150 million euros (\$154m). Yet PSG will also be determined to do everything they can to provide Mbappe with a team good enough to deliver finally the trophy he wants the most, and that the Qataris have

chased without success since arriving in Paris in 2011. This season's defeat in the last 16 to Real Madrid following a collapse in the second leg was just the latest humiliation for PSG in the Champions League, a series that most notably includes the 6-1 defeat to Barcelona in 2017. Five years ago they reacted to that stinging loss by signing Neymar from Barcelona as well as a teenage Mbappe. Now they have exacted revenge on Madrid by denying them Mbappe. "I always said that Paris was my home. I hope I can carry on doing what I love most - playing football and winning trophies," the player said after the announcement of his new deal and before scoring a hat-trick in PSG's 5-0 win over Metz on Saturday in their last game of the season. Hours after that

came the news that sporting director Leonardo - heavily criticised by supporters - had been fired. Reports in France on Sunday



Campos, the Portuguese recruitment guru who helped build title-winning teams at Lille and Monaco and knows Mbappe well.

COAS Inter-club Hockey continues

SWABI: Chief of the Army Staff Inter-Club Hockey Championship continued in full swing in Swabi under the aegis of District Hockey Association with more matches decided of the League round here on Sunday. In the first match Mehran hockey club beat Umar Khel club by 7-0 in a one sided match here at Yar Hussain Hockey Ground Swabi. Abbas scored the first goal in 13th minute of the second quarter while two more goals were scored in the 14th and 23rd minute of the second and third quarter by completing his hat-trick. After center striker Abbas Khan hat-trick, Shahzad and Tufail Khan scored 2 goals each on the field attempt. Hasan Bacha and Rasheed were the umpires of the match while Said Bakht Shah and Niaz Muhammad were the judges in field jury. – APP



PESHAWAR: Director of Operations Peshawar Zalmi Mohammad Akram along with team members during a press conference. – DNA

Subsidy an economic inequality

BILAL AMJAD

Not many concepts of economics are popular with the people of Pakistan. However, subsidies will be on the list of almost every Pakistani that tells how the government can promote economic welfare. People's fascination with subsidies is based on the welfare concept of the country which is endorsed by many economists of Pakistan. Tax rebates and subsidies are the basic tool for the current governments to woo voters. In some cases benefits of the subsidy are exclusively given to economic agents belonging to a particular political constituency. Now let's talk about the grants given to the OMC's (Oil Marketing Companies) and Energy Divisions worth billions to keep fuels and energy prices frozen at the existing levels. The previous government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf had frozen the petroleum prices to facilitate consumers by paying a huge

chunk in subsidies that are widening the fiscal deficit further, the same case goes with the current government. OGRA had projected the May oil subsidy at Rs 118.60 billion based on the current international prices resulting in widening the fiscal deficit. Furthermore the subsidies play a vital role in inequality and generating a gap

"Although people who had a salary of Rs 20000 at the time could actually afford the same bread costing Rs 4 per unit"

between the poor and the rich because in Pakistan everyone enjoys the perks of the subsidies given even if they can afford the current prices of the certain products. As back in 2008 the Punjab government took an initiative called as Sasti Roti scheme. Under which the government gave subsidies of billion of rupees on flour that was to be supplied to almost 14500 tandoors

and almost 47 mechanical bread plants for the provision of bread to the downtrodden at half the market cost of Rs 4. But people who were privileged and could afford the bread at the market cost still had the perks of enjoying the cheap bread. Although people who had a salary of Rs 20000 at the time could actually afford the same bread costing

and middle income individuals. Subsidised projects in fact often falls prey to financial difficulties quite often which place serious burden on public expenditure. In order to make room for loan repayments the government has to compromise spending on areas which needs our more attention and can minimise the inequality gap such as health and education sector. Our government and financial experts should take such matters under consideration and must devise proper systematic programmes like BISP Benazir Income Support Programme or Ehsas Programme to let the unprivileged benefit from the subsidies. Other than granting billions to subsidise the general products the government must find other alternative solutions to balance things out such as spending on educational projects, health department and development projects to balance things out and to minimise the unequal gap between rich and poor. *The writer is a BBA student at SZABIST Islamabad*

Crisis intensifies...

FROM PAGE 01

Podolyak ruled out agreeing to a ceasefire and said Kyiv would not accept any deal with Moscow that involved ceding territory. Making concessions would backfire on Ukraine because Russia would hit back harder after any break in fighting, he said. "The war will not stop (after concessions). It will just be put on pause for some time," Polonsky 2nd Lead 'Ukraine must decide its own future'.

PTI announces...

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followers that he wants the "entire nation to come to Islamabad" adding that he would be leading the long march from Peshawar. During the presser, Khan demanded a date for a fresh election as well as the dissolution of assemblies. He also sent a message to the country's military and asked it to adhere to its promise of "neutrality." He said that people from all walks of life should be joining his long march, especially women, and added that he will remain in Islamabad for as long as it will be required. "We are ready to sacrifice our lives but will never accept these thieves ruling the country," he said. "We need a date for the fresh elections and a dissolution of the assemblies." The former prime minister said that the PTI had always been a peaceful party and had "never instigated violence or chaos." "This isn't politics, but this is jihad (holy war). If [the government] tried to stop the long march, that would be illegal and we will take action against it if that happens." At the beginning of the press briefing, Khan praised the progress his government made during its tenure and criticised the incumbent setup for pushing the country towards bankruptcy. He then reiterated that a United States-backed conspiracy, "hatched with the connivance of the most corrupt people", ended up becoming successful in removing him and coming to power. Khan said that he had learned of the "conspiracy" in June last year, adding that he had been trying hard to ward it off but, unfortunately, his efforts bore no fruit. "This conspiracy was not hatched against me but it was a plot against Pakistan," he said, adding that his government was sent packing at a time when the country was moving towards "unprecedented progress" in terms of, inter alia, industrial growth and a record-breaking increase in the gross domestic product (GDP). He then talked about how his government fought against the coronavirus pandemic and steered the country out of the crisis for which the "entire world praised Pakistan."

Khan's long...

FROM PAGE 01

should be taken as per the wishes of the people. The JUI-F chief said there is no democratic government in Balochistan. International powers wanted to divide us, he added. Maulana Fazl said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan is working on an agenda of dividing Pakistan. He said his party will throw out the Jews' agents from the country.

Briefs

Joe Biden felicitates Australian PM-elect Albanese

TOKYO: US President Joe Biden on Sunday called Australia's incoming prime minister Anthony Albanese to congratulate him on his election victory and underline the strength of their countries' alliance, the White House said.

The two leaders will meet Tuesday at the Quad group summit in Tokyo and the White House has praised Albanese for deciding to make the trip. "President Biden reaffirmed the United States' steadfast commitment to the US-Australia alliance and his intent to work closely with the new government to make it stronger still," it said in a statement. "President Biden expressed deep appreciation for the prime minister-designate's own early commitment to the alliance, reflected in his decision to travel almost immediately to Tokyo to attend the Quad Summit." This is "a vital opportunity to exchange views and continue to drive practical cooperation in the Indo-Pacific", the statement https://islamabadpost.com.pk/sco-states-to-play-key-role-for-global-economic-integration/added, using the administration's term for the Asia-Pacific region. - APP

Four new cities likely to get hotter in 21st century

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

"Hyderabad will likely become the hottest city of Pakistan by the end of the century with the highest average temperature reaching 29.9 degree Celsius under RCP4.5 and 32 degree Celsius under RCP8.5 followed by Jacobabad, Bahawalnagar, and Bahawalpur", the report found. The most of the hottest cities were detected in areas on the southern side of Pakistan whereas the wettest cities, Murree, Balakot and Muzaffarabad, are located in the monsoon region. Dry conditions are likely to be prevalent in Dalbandin followed by Khanpur and Jacobabad under both RCPs, it said.

A research titled 'identifying hotspot cities vulnerable to climate change in Pakistan under CMIP5 climate projections' which was carried out by senior scientific officer of Global Climate Change Impact Studies (GCISC) Dr Shaukat Ali and co-authored by Rida Sehar Kiani. The report identified hotspot cities in terms of temperature and precipitation and variation in the weather patterns. - APP

Hybrid oilseed to enhance edible oil production: expert

BEIJING: Executive member of the Asia and Pacific Seed Association and General Manager of Wuhan Qingfa Hesheng Seed Company, Zhu Xiaobo said that the hybrid canola variety developed by her company has been planted in Pakistan about 10,000 hectares of land, covering around 6000 households. In the next three to five years, we expect it to expand to over 40,000 hectares and provide more, healthier edible oil to Pakistani people, she told China Economic Net (CEN) in an interview. Edible oil shortage has long been a hot topic in Pakistan, which imports edible oil worth \$250 million annually, accounting for 75% of its entire consumption. The hybrid canola developed by the company and planted in Bhakkar, Multan, Draya Khan, Chishtian, etc. of Punjab, features earlier maturation, short strain, and low content of erucic acid and glucosinolate, two substances that adversely affect people's cardiovascular health. - APP

Brooklyn Chamber to promote US-Pak trade

US statement to help Pakistan rebuild economy welcomed

Randy Peers said that the US has about 21,000 companies in the food processing sector having \$750 billion in revenue while worldwide processed food sales are total about \$2 trillion, so the US accounts for 37.5% of all sales, he informed

DNA

NEW YORK: Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce will extend all-out cooperation to promote bilateral trade between the US and Pakistan. The chamber will also help Pakistani businessmen to explore investment opportunities in the US, said President and CEO of Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce Randy Peers. Talking to President of United Business Group (UBG) Zubair Tufail, President US-Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce (USPICC) Sajjad Qamar and Secretary-General USPICC Malik Sohail Hussain, he said that the US offers splendid opportunities for Pakistani exporters and importers. He said that some sectors of cooperation include apparel and textiles, biotechnology, food processing, halal foods, biryani festivals, arranging fashion weeks to promote Pakistani clothing and promotion



of Pakistani handicrafts. Randy Peers said that the US has about 21,000 companies in the food processing sector having \$750 billion in revenue while worldwide processed food sales are total about \$2 trillion, so the US accounts for 37.5% of

all sales, he informed.

Highlighting the contributions of the US towards the socio-economic development of Pakistan, he said that the US has always devoted significant resources to support Pakistan's economy. Zubair Tufail, Sajjad Qamar and Malik Sohail said that the US is an incredibly important country for Pakistan. It is one of the top investment partners and export destinations for Pakistan, they said. Relations between Pakistan and the US have endured the test of time and we are here to cement the bilateral ties through trade, they said.

The business leaders said that Brooklyn is known for its developed food industry and we will explore opportunities for exports, imports and joint ventures. They welcomed the recent statement by a State Department spokesperson who assured Pakistan of strong US support for their efforts to rebuild the Pakistani economy.

SAARC Chamber urges IMF for timely bail out package to Sri Lanka

ISLAMABAD: President SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday urged the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to work out timely bail out package to put defaulting Sri Lanka, a financially crumbled country, on track. Talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs led by Noreen Asim Sial-an emerging youtuber, he said that main source of its revenue was tourism and deadly pandemic badly hit their tourism sector because of absence of foreign tourists which led to this ugly situation coupled with lack of good governance besides rising inflation. He urged the world including SAARC member countries to come forward and save trembling Sri Lanka from total collapse. He said being top leader of South Asia, he is confident that tourism will pick up again and worsening economic condition will be overcome in the days to come studied with good governance. He said Sri Lanka is seeking to restructure debts of more than \$50bn its

owes to foreign creditors to make it more manageable to repay. He said Sri Lankan government needs \$4bn this year to little bit settle the score and bring the peaceful normal life. Iftikhar Ali Malik, an octogenarian trade leader feared that Sri Lanka's default is flashing a warning sign that surging inflation is set to take a painful toll in other developing nations. Responding to a question of Noreen Asim Sial, he said "Pakistan will never become Sri Lanka, we have robust agriculture economy and colossal undocumented informal economy, which keeps the country sailing smoothly". He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is known for working over time and under his dynamic leadership Pakistan will flourish and an era of progress, prosperity and development will usher in with the active participation of private sector which will play key role in strengthening the national economy by broadening the tax base. - APP

First-ever Pashto song on Pak-China friendship released

DNA

ISLAMABAD: First-ever Pashto song on Pak-China friendship has been released on the occasion of 71st anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. The people of Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have sent a friendship message in the form of the song to their Chinese brothers and sisters. The song was prepared in Pashto language by China Window, a Chinese

cultural Center based in Peshawar, in collaboration with the provincial Department of Youth, KP Culture and Tourism Authority. A colorful song-launching ceremony was held at China Window. Famous singer and Legendary singer Khayal Muhammad, who has sung more than 50,000 songs in many languages including Urdu and Pashto, officially launched the song on the occasion of the 71st Anniversary of Pak-China Friendship. Khayal Muhammad while talking to the media said the message of love and affection sent from Peshawar to the people of China in

Nawaz acted as the director. Famous Pakistani singers Sitara Younis and Sajjad Khan have sung it with prominent Chinese singers Shao Feng and Lan Yuliang. Famous singer and Legendary singer Khayal Muhammad, who has sung more than 50,000 songs in many languages including Urdu and Pashto, officially launched the song on the occasion of the 71st Anniversary of Pak-China Friendship. Khayal Muhammad while talking to the media said the message of love and affection sent from Peshawar to the people of China in

the form of a history-making Pashto song can be used to gauge the importance of friendship between the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that the Pak-China friendship is deeper than the sea and higher than the Himalayas and will be further strengthened in the future. Poet Hashmat Javed Javid said that he has written hundreds of songs but it is no less an honor for him to write this song regarding Pak-China friendship. He said that this song in Pashto and Chinese language is the voice of hearts of all Pakistanis.

UPBC for further enhancing trade with EU

ISLAMABAD: Chairman UK-Pakistan Business Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday underlined the importance of further enhancing trade with European Union under GSP plus status. Talking to a delegation of young dynamic exporters led by Chaudhry Arab Arain, he said the granted GSP plus status to Pakistan mainly aimed at fostering economic stability and good governance in the country. However, Pakistan's progress viceversa objectives remains below the potential. He urged the

young exporters take full advantage of this status and further enhance exports by identifying hidden EU markets. He said "The European Union is Pakistan's second most important trading partner as Pakistan's export increased by 86% from Euro 3.56 billion in 2013 to Euro 6.64 billion in 2021 while the exports of EU to Pakistan swell to 69% from Euro 3.31 billion in 2013 to Euro 5.59 billion in 2021." He said "Pakistan always values its relation with EU. He said proposed legislation for GSP plus 2024-34 by the European Commission will greatly benefit either sides." Mian Kashif Ashfaq, who is also former Chairman Faisalabad Industrial Estate Management Company (FIEMCO) said "This forum will also facilitate the importers and exporters of either countries especially in agro food, energy and renewable energy sectors." Chaudhry Arab Arain hoped that many more European companies would reap benefits from the ease of doing business initiatives of government of Pakistan. - APP



LEEDS: Senior PPP leader and former Chairman Municipal Committee Lalamusa Nadeem Asghar Kaira received souvenir from the Lord Mayor of Leeds, during his recent visit to the United Kingdom. - DNA

APBF gears up consultations for budget proposals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has started consultations for the final preparation of the Federal Budget proposals for 2022-23. This was announced at a meeting held here to finalize the proposals for the upcoming budget. The meeting was attended by APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood, APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi, Executive Committee members, besides various representatives of a number of trade and industry leaders. Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the APBF has evolved two-pronged strategy to prepare proposals for the upcoming budget. On the first leg, all the Executive Committee members have been asked to submit sector-specific details about the problems be-

ing faced by their respective businesses, while secondly, a meeting of all the trade and industry associations has also been convened to get their final suggestions about the upcoming budget. After finalizing these proposals, the APBF would submit them to the Finance Ministry so that these proposals could be incorporated in the upcoming budget document, he said. Syed Maaz Mahmood informed the meeting that efforts are being made to give the government a set of suggestions that would help turn the upcoming budget business-friendly in true sense of the word. He said business community understood that the government was utilizing its abilities to overcome the economic challenges but, at the same, the private sector considered itself duty-bound to tell the govt of several hitches faced by it.

Cryptocurrency in Pakistan: Crackdown or Phobia?

NABEEL ASGHAR

VEN at the official level in Pakistan, the phrases "cryptocurrency" and "CBDC" are ambiguous (Central Bank Issued Digital Currency). Both have a lot of similarities, which adds to the confusion, but there is one important difference between them. The blockchain framework underpins cryptocurrency, allowing for decentralised monetary governance. The state bank, on the other hand, issues and centralises digital currencies. Decentralization on the blockchain means that the data is immutable, which means that it can never be changed because it is recorded on numerous servers around the world. The term "decentralised" is often misinterpreted to mean unsafe because there is no sovereign authority to control the mechanisms. The tremendous volatility of bitcoin market value, which is determined by market forces with

no official involvement, is an example of the disadvantage of decentralisation. The economic and financial system could be harmed by the mere volatility of a means of exchange. The value of digital currency, on the other hand, is controlled by the central bank, allowing for reduced volatility and the preservation of the currency's value over time. Authorities are particularly concerned about the high level of anonymity, which they feel encourages unlawful activity. Crypto proponents, on the other side, argue that crypto transaction tracking is significantly more sophisticated than ordinary currency transaction tracking, but we must remember that elaborate security protocols have not been built to respond to this sophisticated transaction tracking. Second, because Pakistan is already on the FATF's grey list, it cannot afford to regulate crypto without appropriate understanding and management. The federal agency has been investigating

digital transaction samples for some months. It shows how strict the federal watchdog's rules have become, as well as how swiftly they're being applied. In Pakistan, customers send money directly to sellers for cryptocurrency investments using the peer-to-peer model, while service providers act as middlemen and provide escrow services to alleviate counterparty credit risks. Traditional international payment methods, like as debit and credit cards, cannot be used to obtain these currencies due to the SBP's prohibition on financial institutions operating under its authority. For this reason, most investors, according to the FPCCI report, use bank transfers or alternative means such as JazzCash or EasyPaisa. Despite Pakistan's third place on the Global Crypto Adoption Index, the State Bank of Pakistan is wary of cryptocurrency and its regulation. The State Bank of Pakistan's Banking Policy and Regulation Department

(BPRD) issued Circular No. 3 in April 2018, forbidding the trading of virtual assets. Furthermore, a standard investigation was initiated against the profiles of 1,064 people who performed 2,923 transactions a few months ago under RE-955/2021. Binance, Coinbase, and Coinmama were among the online exchanges used in the transactions, which totaled Rs. 51 million. Approximately 67 percent of crypto investors in Pakistan use centralised services, while just 33 percent use decentralised finance (DeFi) platforms for crypto-related transactions. Meanwhile, our friendly neighbour China has openly banned cryptocurrencies and has already launched the digital yuan in 12 Chinese towns and regions. Following China, the Digital Euro and Indian Rupee are in the works, with Pakistan's State Bank announcing in April 2019 that it is working on a plan to introduce Pakistani digital currency by 2025. The stated goals of launching a digital currency are to increase fi-

ancial inclusion while decreasing inefficiencies and corruption. During the same year, the SBP published the National Payment Systems Strategy, as well as a digital currency to encourage economic participation. The current situation in Pakistan could indicate one of two things: either the government is concerned about cryptocurrency adoption and plans to regulate it after conducting thorough research, halting transactions until that time comes, or the government is not concerned about crypto to adoption and plans to regulate it after. Alternatively, the government is considering developing CBDC to suit current digital transaction needs while maintaining control through centralization. Given the facts, news, and current occurrences surrounding cryptos and CBDC in Pakistan, it is easy to conclude that the latter has significantly greater potential.

- The writer is a student at SZABIST Islamabad

China's food industry records steady expansion

BEIJING: China's food industry logged steady growth in terms of production and sales in the first four months of the year, official data showed. The value-added industrial output of the agricultural and sideline food processing sector rose 4.7 percent year on year during this period, according to the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology. The added value of the food manufacturing sector climbed 4.5 percent year on year, while that of alcohol, beverage and tea manufacturing sectors went up 9.2 percent from a year earlier. During the January-April period, retail sales of grain, oil and food commodities hit 593.6 billion yuan (87.96 billion U.S. dollars), up 9.5 percent year on year, while that of beverage as well as tobacco and alcohol grew by 10.4 percent and 7.8 percent, respectively, the data showed. - Agencies

Namibia experiences rising Covid-19 cases

WINDHOEK: Namibia is engulfed in the fifth wave of COVID-19 infections with more and more patients being admitted in the hospitals, Minister of Health and Social Services Kalumbi Shangula said Saturday. Shangula said in a statement that the number of infections in the school environment and in the community is a matter of concern. "We note with concern that patients who are admitted to ICU are those who are not vaccinated, he said. According to a survey released recently, trust-related issues continue to drive COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in Namibia, as many voice concerns about the safety and possible side effects of the vaccine. Among citizens who say they are unlikely to get vaccinated, a majority are worried about getting a fake or counterfeit vaccine (23 percent); they don't think the vaccine is safe (14 percent); they don't trust the government to ensure that the vaccine is safe (12 percent); they fear that the vaccine may cause COVID-19 or bad side effects (7 percent); they don't trust the source of the vaccine (2 percent), or they think the vaccine was developed too quickly (2 percent), while others believe that God will protect them against COVID-19 (7 percent), the survey showed. - APP

Bangladesh on alert amid monkeypox outbreak

DHAKA: The Bangladeshi government has declared a health alert amid the outbreak of the monkeypox virus in some parts of the world, although no cases have been reported in the country, an official said Sunday. "No monkeypox case has been reported in Bangladesh yet, but we've made the declaration in order to check any eventuality," the official from the health ministry told Xinhua. The official, who didn't like to give his name, explained that initial measures will involve monkeypox screening of all incoming passengers from countries where cases have been detected. Monkeypox is a sylvatic zoonosis with incidental human infections that usually occur in forested parts of Central and West Africa. It is caused by the monkeypox virus, which belongs to the orthopoxvirus family, the World Health Organization (WHO) said. - APP

Vietnam reports 1,319 Covid cases

HANOI: Vietnam recorded 1,319 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday, down by 138 from Saturday, according to its ministry of health. All the new infections were domestically-transmitted in 42 provinces and cities. The Vietnamese capital Hanoi was the pandemic hotspot with 347 new cases recorded on Sunday, followed by the northern Bac Ninh province with 138 and the northern Vinh Phuc province with 90. The infections brought the total daily to 10,708,887 with 43,075 deaths. Nationwide, as many as 9,402,046 COVID-19 patients, or nearly 88 percent of the infections, have recovered. - APP

Briefs

NAB recovers Rs 864 bln since inception

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has recovered Rs 864 billion directly and indirectly from corrupt elements since its inception. While during the tenure of incumbent Chairman Justice Javed Iqbal, the anti graft watch dog has recovered Rs 584 billion directly and indirectly. According to NAB spokesman, the Accountability Courts have convicted 1405 accused persons besides imposing heavy fines on them due to vigorous prosecution of NAB. NAB has overall conviction ratio of 66 percent in the Accountability Courts. Since its inception, NAB received a total of 405768 complaints. Out of which 405212 complaints were disposed off. Right now, scrutiny of 556 complaints was continuing. NAB has authorised verification of 100865 complaints. Of which investigation of some 100425 complaints were processed. While investigations of 779 complaints were continuing. NAB has authorised 9883 inquiries. Of which 8953 inquiries were taken to logical conclusion.

Erdogan discusses concerns with Sweden and Finland

WEB DESK

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, who has objected to Sweden and Finland joining NATO, held phone calls with the leaders of the two countries on Saturday and discussed his concerns about terrorist organisations. Turkey says Sweden and Finland harbour people linked to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militant group and followers of Fethullah Gulen, whom Ankara accuses of orchestrating a 2016 coup attempt. Erdogan told Sweden's Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson that Ankara expected concrete steps to address its concerns, according to the Turkish presidency. He also said an arms exports embargo imposed on Turkey after its Syria incursion in 2019 should be lifted, it added. Andersson said she appreciated the call and that Sweden hoped to strengthen bilateral relations with Turkey. "I emphasized that Sweden welcomes the possibility of cooperation in the fight against international terrorism and emphasized that Sweden clearly supports the fight against terrorism and the terrorist listing of the PKK," she added in a statement.

After day in custody, Mazari returns home

DNA

ISLAMABAD: After spending much of the day in the custody of police and anti-corruption officials shutting between the federal capital and Lahore, former federal human rights minister returned home early on Sunday morning. Her return came after the Islamabad High Court extraordinarily opened its doors after office hours on Saturday to hear a petition, filed by her daughter Imaan Zainab Mazari, and ordered her immediate release along with a probe into the incident by a judicial commission. On Saturday afternoon, uniformed officers from the Kohsar police station in the federal capital, along with officers of Punjab's Anti-Corruption Department in Dera Ghazi Khan had intercepted and arrested Mazari from near her home in Islamabad. Police said that she had been arrested in a case of land grabbing. Mazari's daughter, Imaan, who is a lawyer, had told the media and posted a tweet on microblogging site Twitter, claiming that her mother had been arrested by male members of the police while they had also allegedly beat her.

Nobody will vote for PTI, says Rana Sana

Interior Minister says that long march of PTI will dealt as per law and no one will be allowed to disrupt peace and order

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

BAHAWALPUR: Former Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Nawaz Sharif will address the people of Bahawalpur on May 28 on the day of Yom Takbir through video link. PML-N Punjab President and Federal Interior Minister Rana Sana ullah was talking to media persons in Bahawalpur. Federal Minister for Interior Affairs Rana Sanaullah has said that restoration of Bahawalpur province is included in PMLN's manifesto and a bill has already been passed with two third majority from Punjab Assembly for formation of Bahawalpur and South Punjab provinces. Talking to media persons here today, he said that Maryam Nawaz will address a grand public gathering in Bahawalpur on May 28 which marks Youm-e-Takbeer, the day when the then Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif made Pakistan's Defence unconquerable through atomic tests at Chaghi. He said that due to those nuclear tests, no enemy has got courage to threaten Pakistan since then. Responding to a question he said that the arrest of PTI leader Shireen Mazari was not ordered by federal or provincial governments rather the law took its due course. However, Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shabbaz ordered her release. He said that our government respects court's decisions (Shireen Mazari's Release) and judicial inquiry will be done. To another question Rana



Sanaullah said that Pakistan was facing economic crisis due to agreement of PTI government with IMF. He said that cybercrime laws need to be reformed to keep a vigil on abuse of social media. He further said that PMLN plans to bring cybercrime laws which will give freedom to social media users but also keep a

check on abusive and fake content. To another question, he said that Imran Khan is using foul language at public gatherings and provoking his followers to publicly malign dissident members of parliament. Interior Minister said that long march of PTI will dealt as per law and no one

will be allowed to disrupt peace and order. Minister of State for Interior Abdur Rehman Kanju, former Federal Minister Muhammad Baligh-ur-Rehman, former Senator Saud Majeed, former Provincial Minister Malik Iqbal Channar and others were present on the occasion.

Significant progress in the murder of two sisters

ANWAR CHOHAN



The slain sisters were against their forced marriages in the family, which allegedly killed both the brother and the uncle. The arrested accused include main accused Shehryar (brother), Mohammad Hanif (uncle), Qasid, Atiq, Hassan and Asfandyar. IG Punjab orders DPO Gujarat to investigate the case under its supervision. The case will be brought to a logical conclusion as soon as possible by completing the investigation on merit as soon as possible.

KHARIAN: Gujarat Police using modern technology and professional skills have arrested 6 accused including Mastermind, according to Punjab Police Spokesperson. Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shabbaz Sharif and IG Punjab had taken notice of the incident which took place Saturday. IG Punjab Rao Sardar Ali Khan directed DPO Gujarat to take all possible steps for immediate arrest of the accused. DPO Gujarat Ata-ur-Rehman's held a press conference on arrest of accused in DPO office. He informed about the details of arrest of 6 accused including masterminds of the incident. As soon as the incident was reported, he personally visited the accident site and after registration of the case, investigation was carried out from all angles, according to DPO Gujarat. In the preliminary investigation, the accused have confessed to planning the incident and murder, said DPO Gujarat.

CM gives final touches to new Peshawar City plan

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: A detailed master plan for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's mega housing project "New Peshawar Valley" has been finalized which will be formally approved in the Peshawar Development Authority's Board meeting, next week. The decision was made in a meeting held here the other day with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan in the chair. Besides provincial cabinet members Taimur Saleem Jhagra, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan and others attended the meeting. The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the master plan of the project. The housing scheme will be established on an area of over 0.1 million of which 36% area has been allocated for residential apartments while the remaining area will be utilized for public buildings, commercial areas, parking, parks, open spaces, graveyards, Utility areas, roads and other

facilities have been planned which are indispensable for any modern housing society. In the detailed master plan 76000 residential plots of different categories have been proposed under the project. Other key features of the project include Sports City, Education and Health City which will be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities of international standard. Cultural Village, Gandhara Museum, Theme Park, Forest, Adventure Area and other facilities. The Chief Minister, while agreeing in principle to the proposed master plan, has convened a meeting of the PDA board next week and said that the meeting would formally approve the master plan. He said that New Peshawar Valley was the only project which being set up under the land sharing formula. On the occasion, the chief minister directed the quarters concerned to fulfill all necessary requirements for issuance of allotment letters of plots to the owners of verified lands by the end of May as per agreed formula. He also directed to simultaneously start work on different aspects for its speedy completion and all concerned stakeholders be taken on board in this process.

Iran diplomat calls for collective coop. to fight terrorism

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: The Islamic Republic of Iran as the biggest victim of terrorism in the world underlined the need for collective cooperation in the fight against terrorism, an Iranian diplomat said. Consul General of the Islamic Republic of Iran Hassan Nourian published a message on Friday, noting, "The Iranian people and government censure any kind of creating insecurity and chaos as well as promoting fear caused by terrorist moves and satanic acts committed by common enemies of regional nations." Nourian reiterated condemnation of recent terrorist attacks in Karachi city of Pakistan, expressing solidarity with injured people and families of victims of the incidents, adding that "Iran itself is the biggest victim of terrorism and from the beginning of the victory of the Islamic Revolution up to now, our 17k citizens lost their lives by satanic elements of terrorism as well as their supporters."



LAHORE: Amir Jamiat e Ahl e Hadith Professor Sajid Mir and Senator Hafiz Abdul Karim call on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. - DNA

No-trust motion against Pervaiz Elahi dismissed

The political situation intensified Sunday morning with the arrest of the PA Director-General for Parliamentary Affairs Rai Mumtaz after the announcement of an emergency session

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The no-confidence motion against Punjab Assembly Speaker Pervaiz Elahi was dismissed on Sunday after PML-N MPA Sami Ullah Khan, who had filed the no-trust motion against Elahi, failed to show up. As the result, the much-anticipated session of the assembly has been postponed till June 6. The session - with the Panel of Chairmen Waseem Khan Badozai in the chair - was adjourned within six minutes despite it starting after a delay of two hours. As the assembly's proceedings started, the speaker called out the name of PML-N MPA Sami Ullah Khan, who had filed the no-trust motion against Pervaiz Elahi, but he was not present in the House. Due to his absence from the House, Badozai disposed of the motion and deferred the session. Before the session, the MPAs reached the PA to attend the meeting pre-

viously scheduled to begin at 12:30pm. However, the session couldn't be started on time as the lawmakers were stopped from entering the premises. Security had been tightened around the Assembly in Lahore on Sunday morning. PA Speaker Pervaiz Elahi called the session today while cancelling the previous date of the assembly session scheduled for May 30. The political situation intensified Sunday morning with the arrest of the PA Director-General for Parliamentary Affairs Rai Mumtaz after the announcement of an emergency session. The police were directed to stay on high alert and a heavy police force was deputed in the surroundings of



the provincial assembly. Police also barricaded different spots on Lahore's Mall Road, including the routes leading from CM House and Awan-e-Iqbal to the PA. Earlier, the administration had closed the doors of the PA, while barbed wires were placed in front of the assembly building. Punjab Assembly staff said that even they are not allowed to enter the building. Due to strict arrangements, even the security team of Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shabbaz wasn't allowed to enter the Assembly. Meanwhile, PML-N decided to send only 15 to 20 MPAs inside the PA in the first phase as soon as the gates opened. Following the dismissal of the no-trust motion against

Elahi, PML-N has announced that it would submit a motion against the speaker once again. PML-N members called a meeting Sunday to decide the future strategy in which leader Uzma Bukhari asked PML-N members as to why they did not reach the House on time. Earlier, the security team of Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shabbaz was barred from entering the House. Meanwhile, PML-N leader Ata Tarar said that MPAs and media were not allowed to enter the provincial assembly. "Speaker Pervaiz Elahi has brought goons from Gujrat," he claimed, adding that "some people" were brought to the House yesterday night. "You [Pervaiz Elahi] are disrespecting the House," the PML-N leader added. He said they would enter the assembly accompanied by media persons. He maintained that the government had submitted a no-confidence motion against the speaker as per the Constitution and vowed to challenge the speaker's "illegal actions" in court.

Storm, rain lashes federal capital

ISLAMABAD: Dust-thunderstorm-rain lashed the federal capital on Sunday night as per the forecast of weather experts turning the weather pleasant. The rain started as a drizzle at around 8:00 pm and turned into light rain giving respite to the people from hot weather that prevailed at day time.

According to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), dust-thunderstorm-rain with gusty winds are expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit Baltistan, Kashmir, Islamabad and upper Punjab on Monday.

Hot and dry weather is expected in other parts of the country with dust raising/gusty winds are likely in central and southern parts. According to the synoptic situation, a westerly wave is present over upper parts of the country and likely to strengthen from today (evening/night). During the last 24 hours, the weather remained hot and dry in most parts of the country, while very hot in plain areas. However, rain-thunderstorm occurred at a few places in upper Punjab, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan.

The rainfall recorded during the last 24 hours was Punjab: Chakwal 04 mm, Narowal 01, Gilgit Baltistan: Babusar 03, Astore 01 and Kashmir: Garhi Dupatta 01 mm. The highest maximum temperatures recorded were Mohenjodaro, Jacobabad, Dadu, Sibbi, Shaheed Benazirabad 49 C, Larkana, Padidan and Sakrand 48 C. - APP

WHO expects more cases of monkeypox globally

MONITORING DESK

LONDON: The World Health Organisation (WHO) said it expects to identify more cases of monkeypox as it expands surveillance in countries where the disease is not typically found. As of Saturday, 92 confirmed cases and 28 suspected cases of monkeypox have been reported from 12 member states that are not endemic for the virus, the UN agency said, adding it will provide further guidance and recommendations in coming days for countries on how to mitigate the spread of monkeypox. "Available information suggests that human-to-human transmission is occurring among people in close physical contact with cases who are symptomatic", the agency added. Monkeypox is an infectious disease that is usually mild, and is endemic in parts of west and central Africa. It is spread by close contact, so it can be relatively easily contained through such measures as self-isolation and hygiene.

Govt effectively controls Cholera in Dera Bugti

ISLAMABAD: Due to the effective response of the government on the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the health officials remained successful in controlling the Cholera epidemic in Pir Koh, Dera Bugti. The government immediately responded to the situation by scaling up interventions and mobilizing resources to the affected area and after the complete recovery of 3,615 patients from Cholera now the under-treatment patients in the hospital were only three. It is pertinent to mention here that on receiving reports of an increasing number of Cholera cases in Dera Bugti, the Prime Minister immediately issued special directions to control the situation by using all resources. On which, the provincial government of Balochistan had submitted a final report to the Prime Minister on the situation and special measures taken on PM's direction to control the situation. As per the report, the provincial government on the direction of the PM, earlier stopped the contaminated water of natural spring which was the main cause of the pandemic while later opening it to use for other purposes after chlorination. - APP