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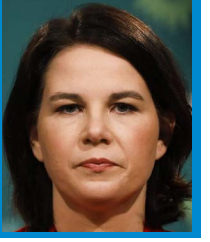
Detailed News On Page-07

US to increase pressure on Taliban govt

Detailed News On Page-08

German FM vows justice for Bucha

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

PM orders revival of NCOC

ISLAMABAD, May 10 (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday, taking notice of the detection of highly-infectious sub-variant of Omicron virus, directed the restoration of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). The prime minister ordered immediate restoration of the NCOC after the country a day earlier had reported its first case of Omicron sub-variant BA.2.12.1. He also sought a report from the Ministry of National Health on the current situation of the virus in the country. - APP

Imran's statement unlawful

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb has termed PTI Chief Imran Khan's statement as unconstitutional and bullying. In a statement, she said what a hypocrisy it is that on the one hand, Imran Khan talks of respecting the constitution while on the other hand, he violates it and encourages hooliganism. She questions as to whom he is deceiving through his duplicity. The Minister said that Imran Khan staged a shameful act in the National Assembly which was repeated in Punjab. She said the violation of constitution committed in the National Assembly was repeated in Punjab.

Lawbreakers must be held accountable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister and Chair Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari talking to the journalists in the parliament house said that whoever breaks and subverts the constitution has to be tried under article 6 of the constitution. Whatever happened and done from April 3 to 10th and afterwards by the PTI members amount to subverting constitution.



ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Dr. Christian Turner calls on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. - DNA

Army and PTI keeping Pakistan intact, says Khan

Says Shehbaz Shareef and his brother are the real Mir Jaffer and Mir Sadiq

KAMRAN GUJJAR

JEHLUM: Chairman PTI said that Narendra Modi did not dare to speak against the Pakistan Army as long as he was in power. Only PTI and the Pakistan Army are keeping the country intact, he said addressing a public gathering in Jehlum. Addressing the public at the public demonstration in Jehlum Chairman Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran Khan said that it happens seldom in a nation's history that it decides to fight for its independence. He thanked the people of Jehlum for their overwhelming welcome of him and his party, he specifically appreciated the participation of women and children in the demonstration. The former Premier said that an American under Secretary warned Pakistan about grave consequences if the PTI government remains in power and if it is removed then all will be forgiven. The elected Prime Minister of 220 million people was ousted

Continued on Page 06

Khan urges SC to intervene in governor de-notification

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: PTI Chairman Imran Khan on Tuesday urged the Supreme Court to take notice of what he described as a "blatant violation" of the Constitution and law in Punjab after a late-night federal government notification saw Omar Sarfraz Cheema removed as the province's governor. In a statement, Imran demanded the top court take "immediate notice of the blatant violation of the Constitution and the law in Punjab". His

Continued on Page 06

Pak condemns India's anti-Azaan measures

The spokesperson said it is also noted with deep regret that loudspeakers are being removed from mosques across various states

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has condemned the deeply disturbing anti-Azaan measures taken in the Indian state of Karnataka. In a press release issued on Tuesday, Foreign Office spokesperson Asim Iftikhar said we condemn the highly deplorable incidents involving playing of Hanuman

Chalisa and other Hindu devotional songs on loudspeakers as a counter to the Muslims' call to prayer at various mosques in Indian state of Karnataka. The disturbing incidents occurred only a day after Sri Ram Sena Chief made the despicable call for drowning the Azaan through the provocative playing of Hanuman Chalisa and other Hindu religious hymns. It is condemnable that a reprehensible so-called Azan se Azaadi campaign has been launched by Hindu fanatic groups in Karnataka which lays bare the new level of religious radicalism in the BJP-ruled India. The spokesperson said it is also noted with

Continued on Page 06

Macron warns against humiliating Russia

NEWS DESK

PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron has warned against humiliating Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, if and when any peace settlement is agreed. He told reporters in Strasbourg that once the war ends, Moscow and Kyiv will eventually have to sit down and negotiate with each other, so any further tensions will only serve to the detriment of the situation. "We will have a peace to build tomorrow, let us never forget that," Macron said on Monday. "I mentioned this earlier. We will have to do this with Ukraine and Russia around the table. The end of the discussion and the negotiation will be set by Ukraine and Russia. But it will not be done

Continued on Page 06

Ukraine pushes Russian troops back

KHARKIV: Ukraine said on Tuesday its forces had recaptured villages from Russian troops north and northeast of Kharkiv, pressing a counter-offensive that could signal a shift in the war's momentum and jeopardise Russia's main advance. Tetiana Apatchenko, press officer for the 92nd Separate Mechanized Brigade, the main Ukrainian force in the area, confirmed that Ukrainian troops had recaptured the settlements of Cherkaski Tyshky, Ruski Tyshki, Borschchova and Slobzhanske, in a pocket north of Kharkiv in recent days. - Agencies

Govt mulls to resume trade with India

According to sources, cabinet approved appointment of trade minister in Pak embassy in India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif-led Cabinet has approved the appointment of Qamar Zaman Kaira as Trade Minister in its High Commission in New Delhi, said sources. With Pakistan battling financial crisis, Kaira will work closely to restore trade ties with India. Qamar Zaman Kaira is a Pakistan's People's Party (PPP) leader and adviser to Prime Minister Sharif on Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan. Before the abrogation of Article 370 from Kashmir, the Pakistan High Commission had the post of Trade Minister. Irfan Tarad, husband of former Health Minister, was appointed to this post in the previous government. But after the end of his term and in protest against the removal of Article 370, the Imran government did not send anyone to this post. Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb also confirmed on Tuesday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be travelling to London as part of a PML-N delegation to meet party supremo Nawaz Sharif. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad alongside Power Minister Khurram Dastgir, she noted that several media channels were airing the news that PML-N members

Continued on Page 06

Continued on Page 06

Cabinet approves import of wheat

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet has accorded approval to the import of three million metric tons wheat. Briefing media about the decisions taken by the Federal Cabinet which met in Islamabad on Tuesday with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb said the Prime Minister also directed to introduce an incentivized agricultural policy that would enable the country to curtail wheat import. She said the Cabinet also approved revocation of multiple foreign passports under Passport Act, 1974. She said the Cabinet decided that such passports should not only be revoked but also a strategy should be adopted to prevent it

Continued on Page 06

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Inside...

- Imran govt failed to fulfill commitments: Rana Sanaulah - Page 02
- No one allowed to misuse blasphemy law - Page 03
- Chairman CDA orders new block in CDA hospital - Page 04
- The US goes ballistic: America's gun epidemic - Page 05
- German FM vows 'justice' for Bucha on surprise Ukraine visit - Page 06
- Heydar Aliyev, Architect of modern Azerbaijan - Page 07
- CM directs early completion of development schemes - Page 08

Imran govt failed to fulfill commitments: Rana Sanaullah

FAISALABAD: Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan said that Imran Khan's government was destined to collapse as it failed to fulfill its election manifesto and commitments made with the people. Addressing a workers convention late on Monday night at Pansra, he said the previous corrupt and incompetent government had categorically assured that all problems would be resolved within 30 days, corruption would be curbed within 90 days and 10 million jobs would be provided to youth. The entire manifesto was based on white lies which failed to even start work on its lofty claims and instead its focus remained on victimization of opposition. This situation played havoc with the economy and unbridled inflation made the life of common people miserable. RanaSanaullah said, "We came to power just three weeks ago and it was revealed that corruption was prevalent everywhere". The governance system was choked, postings of deputy commissioners and DPOs were linked with monetary benefits and in this connection no one could hope that such officers could discharge their professional duties efficiently. He lamented that instead of presenting his performance Imran Khan was supporting Farah Khan who was not a public office holder. He said that former rulers had booked him in fake case of 15 Kg heroin when they failed to trace

any illegal thing against him. He said that previous rulers not only destroyed the economy but also distorted foreign policy. Similarly, Pakistan's principled stand on Kashmir issue also suffered a major setback. He said that when allies of previous government decided to left them because of their continuous fascist policies and incompetence the government itself collapsed. "We neither bribed any parliamentarian nor received vote of any PTI dissident parliamentarian during no confidence motion", he said and added that when allies were supporting IK then they were good guys and when they criticized his incompetence and bad governance the previous government started the propaganda of so-called conspiracy. He said the propaganda of American conspiracy was a preemptive ploy as Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was expecting a shameful defeat in the upcoming elections. He asked if Farah Khan and UsmanBuzdar were also a conspiracy of United States. He said that when Jehangir Khan and Aleem Khan were with IK all was well and good but when they rejected his ill-conceived policies he started dubbing it as US conspiracy. RanaSanaullah said that election could not be won through propaganda and public meetings. He said that IKs public meetings were five times bigger in 2011 but he could manage only 26 seats in National As-

sembly. He said that previous government had initiated a new technique of loot and plunder. Due to their failed policies dollar jumped to Rs 180 which shattered national economy. He said that in 2013 when Nawaz Sharif came into power, there were two visible and immediate problems of load shedding and terrorism. "We made promise to rein in these challenges and successfully resolved these issues", he added. He said that current load shedding was due to incompetence of previous rulers who failed to import gas in time which resulted in the closure of gas fired power houses. He said that this was the year of election we were fully committed to hold elections immediately but the Election Commission of Pakistan had requested the Supreme Court to give at least 7 months to make proper arrangements. He said that coalition government would present budget in June with reasonable relief to people and other segments of economy. About the much trumpeted long march of PTI, he said that we will give them due respect if they remained peaceful but strict action would be taken if they tried to create unrest in the country. RanaSanaullah said that he would visit every union council to identify the problems confronted by masses and resolve the same on immediate basis, however, mega projects would be launched after success in general elections. - APP

Commissioner reviews prices of essential items

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: 10 May 2022: Under the directions of Chief Secretary Punjab, Divisional Commissioner Zahid Hussain hold meeting with traders and reviewed the prices of essential items. Divisional Commissioner said that the district administrations of four district were strictly enforcing the officially fixed prices of essential commodities, in this regard, the negative trend of unjustified increase in prices is also being discouraged, so shopkeepers should charge the fixed prices from the consumers. During the meeting, the current market prices of some essential commodities and fluctuations in their availability rates were reviewed. The Commissioner said that the price control magistrates across the division are conducting regular inspections of the markets and bazaars so that the shopkeepers should continue their cooperation. He asked the traders to avoid hoardings of commodities and declared their stock to market committees. He asked the representatives of chicken, flour, ghee and karyana association to provide relief to the consumers and reduced the price of items. During the meeting, the representatives of trade associations assured their full cooperation and said that they would not disap-



pointed the administration. **FESCO installed 106000 new meters**: The installation of more than 106000 new domestic, commercial and industrial meters has been completed during the last four months in eight districts of Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) jurisdiction, Superintending Engineers (SEs) of the five operation circles have also been directed to install new connections on top priority basis said, General Manager (GM) Customer Services Engineer Itrat Hussain. He further said that FESCO installed 7,547 electricity meters in January, 33,075 meters in February, 42,647 meters in March and 22,825 meters in the month of April. More

than 400,000 meters would receive FESCO very soon and thus, installation of new connections would be speed up, he added. He said that in the light of the special directives of Board of Directors (BODs) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Engr. Bashir Ahmed, FESCO's Customer Services are being equipped with state-of-the-art interactive screens, landline telephones and paperless working so that consumers electricity related problems could be solved immediately. He also directed the operation staff to treat the customers with a happy smile and utilize all measures to resolve their problems on priority basis.

IHC stops FIA from arresting Sami Ibrahim

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday stopped the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) from arresting anchorperson Sami Ibrahim and summoned its Cyber Crime Wing director on next date of hearing. Chief Justice Athar Minallah, who heard the case filed by the mother of Sami Ibrahim, also directed the Cyber Crime Wing to clarify as to why it had issued a press release after issuance of the notice to the anchor. It seemed that something serious was said by the anchor, but the FIA had neither registered a case nor completed inquiry against him, he added. - APP

Murtaza calls for use of Norwegian expertise

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Administrator Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab on Tuesday said that much work could be done, especially in the areas of infrastructure, development, transport, communications and municipal services and Norwegian experience and expertise in urban development can be used. He said this while talking to Norwegian Ambassador Pir Albert Isaas at Karachi Metropolitan Corporation Head office here, said a statement. The Administrator said "There are excellent investment opportunities in Karachi. Norway's experience and expertise in the field of urban development could be utilized." He said "Karachi is the commercial hub of the country and trade of goods continues all year round at the port of Karachi." Due to being an international airport, a large number of domestic and international airlines fly and depart daily, he said. Barrister Murtaza Wahab briefed the Norwegian Ambassador regarding the ongoing development works in the city, improvement of infrastructure and other issues. Barrister Murtaza Wahab welcomed the

Norwegian Ambassador and apprised him of the historical significance of KMC Building. Later, issues of mutual interest were discussed between the Karachi Administrator and Ambassador of Norway. Murtaza Wahab said that Norway and Pakistan have excellent relations, adding that Norway has a special place in the Scandinavian countries and has made tremendous progress in every field. He said that Karachi has a special place in the region due to its unique geographical importance and as a center of trade and business activities, it is of great importance to the neighboring countries. "In view of the unique importance of Karachi, future plans are put forward in all the projects launched here," said Barrister Murtaza Wahab. The Ambassador of Norway was also accompanied by Second Secretary Political Ms. Silje Marie Andersen and Program Advisor Development Muhammad Bilal Majeed. Ambassador of Norway Pierre Albert Isaas and members of his delegation thanked the Administrator Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab for hospitality and expressed the hope that the present administration of Karachi would work for the betterment and development of the city.



ISLAMABAD: Charge d' Affairs of China Her Excellency Pang Chunxue presenting a souvenir to Federal Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah Khan as she visits his office. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs Federal Cabinet Meeting. - DNA

Ex minister visits THQ hospital Kharian

ANWAR CHOHAN

KHARIAN: Former Provincial Minister Mian Tariq Mahmood accompanied by a delegation visited Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Kharian. MS Dr. Bilal Bin Tariq visited the hospital and briefed about the ongoing development projects. Former Chairman Kharian Sheikh Muhammad Hafee, Former Vice Chairman Lal Khan Gondal, Chaudhry Rashid Mahmood, Zafar Majeed Butt, Major (Retd) Tariq Javed Doga also were present.



Anti-baggar squads arrest nine beggars

DNA

FAISALABAD: The social welfare department caught nine beggars from different areas here on Tuesday. Focal person Muhammad Tahir said anti-beggar squads took beggars into its custody during checking on City Terminal, Akbar Abad, Islamnagar, Madina Town, Iqbal Stadium and handed over to police.

43 profiteers fined

DNA

FAISALABAD: The price control magistrates imposed a fine of Rs 68,000 on profiteers in different markets on Tuesday. The magistrates conducted 912 inspections in different bazaars and markets to check prices of daily use items. They imposed the fine on 43 retailers and vendors over profiteering.

SSC, HSSC exams to be conducted

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Primary and Secondary Education Shahram Tarkai Tuesday said that after a gap of three years, the SSC and HSSC examinations will be held in all subjects this year. He said that 821,906 students would appear in Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examinations while 534,118 would appear in Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) examinations, adding that 3253 centre have been established across KP for SSC examination and 1845 for HSSC. Presiding over a meeting on preparation an action plan for matriculation and intermediate examinations here, he said that 23,720 invigilators and other supervisory staff would perform duty at examinations centers for SSC and 14,209 at HSSC

centres. The minister said that all boards have control rooms for monitoring of examinations while all examination centers in the province will be monitored by CCTV cameras. He directed the board heads to remain in touch with WAPDA department for uninterrupted supply of electricity till the stipulated time in the respective districts during the paper. He also directed to increase the number of paper checkers for timely preparation of examination results and quality checking. The purpose of education boards is not to make money but to spend maximum budget on conducting examinations. The meeting was attended by Special Secretary Education Amir Afaq, Managing Director Private Schools Regulatory Authority Kabir Khan Afridi and all the board heads of the province.

Court Notice

In The court Khuda Yar Civil Judge Class-1st Gujrat
Title: Imtiaz Tariq. versus: Province of Punjab etc.
Suit for Declaration with consequential Relief

Notice to: Province of Punjab through Deputy Commissioner Gujrat, Sub Registrar Gujrat, Inspector Excise & Taxation Circle Jalpur Jattan, Imtiaz Amjad, Imran, Noman, Abdul Rehman, Raheela Kousar, Nazia Kousar, Shagufa widow, Kashif Aslam Butt, Muhammad Ali Butt Sons, Naila Butt, Shumaila Butt, Irum Aslam Butt, Bushra Butt D/o. Muhammad Aslam Butt Late S/o. Muhammad Hussain Late, Gulzar BiBi Widow, Bilawal S/o. Khalid Mehmood Late S/o. Muhammad Zaman Late S/o. Muhammad Hussain Butt Cast Butt R/o. Moh. Sher Shahi Jalpur Jattan Tehsil & District Gujrat. Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendant is not to be served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendant will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 12-05-2022. Otherwise case will be decided ex parte. Given under my hand seal of the court this 10th May, 2022. Qaisar Mehmood Warraich, Court Reporter Gujrat. 0333-8409964

Court Notice

In The court of Umar Rizwan Civil Judge Gujrat Title: Mzhar Iqbal. versus: Bushra Sadiq etc. Suit for Declaration with consequential Relief

Notice to: 1- Bushra Sadiq D/o. Muhammad Sadiq CNIC: 34201-0470616-8 Sakin Lari Adda PO. Khas Karianwal. 2- Secretary Union Council # 8 Karianwala Tehsil & District Gujrat. Whereas in the above mentioned case it has been proved to the satisfaction of the court that the above mentioned defendant is not to be served in ordinary way. It is therefore proclaimed under order 5 rule 20 CPC that if the said defendant will not appear personally or through a duly authorized agent or pleader in court at 8 AM on 19-05-2022. Otherwise case will be decided ex party.

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MAY

May 03 / Poland	National Day
May 06 / Bulgaria	Armed Forces Day
May 06 / UAE	Armed Forces Day
May 07 / Kazakhstan	Armed Forces Day
May 08 / Czech Republic	National Day
May 09 / European Union	National Day
May 17 / Norway	Constitution Day
May 21 / Hungary	Armed 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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Rescue (Police).....	15
Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance.....	1122
& Rescue Services.....	4451122
Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....	9222596
Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20



Enquiry

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



Hospitals

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



Departments

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

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

Water Tank

Islamabad.....	0321-5744480
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ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Amir Ali Ahmad visits Capital's CDA Hospital. – DNA

Chairman CDA orders new block in CDA hospital

The Chairman CDA directed that the administration block which became vacant after the construction of new block in the hospital therefore another block should be constructed by extending this block from three to four stories

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority visited CDA Hospital on Tuesday. Officers of relevant departments were also present on this occasion. On this occasion, the Chairman Capital Development Authority directed the Engineering Wing to expand the Emergency Block of CDA Hospital and to upgrade the Emergency Block in line with modern standards and to install state-of-the-art machinery to provide modern treatment facilities to the patients.

He further directed that a triage facility should be started for the patients coming in the emergency. Under this facility the patients would be divided into three different categories in which patients having cough, cold, fever should be kept in green color. The second category includes patients with heart, liver, kidney and gastroenteritis in yellow and the third category includes critically ill patients such as road accident, heart at-

tack, injuries and those who need immediate medical attention be placed in the red color category. The Chairman CDA directed that the administration block which became vacant after the construction of new block in the hospital therefore another block should be constructed by extending this block from three to four stories. In this regard, orders were issued to the Engineering Wing to prepare a feasibility report and submit it for approval in the next meeting. During the visit, the Chairman

CDA was also briefed about the newly recruited specialists and paramedical staff in the hospital. The Chairman CDA was informed that more new specialties have also been introduced in the hospital including Magsosfacial Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Endocrinology, Neurosurgery, Clinical Psychology and others. The Chairman CDA directed that these departments should be activated immediately so that patients could be provided quality health facilities. The Chairman CDA further directed

that steps should be taken to provide round the clock services including emergency, laboratory, MRI, CT scan and ultrasound. Similarly, plans should be made to relocate the offices of Resuce 1122 to a suitable location so that this emergency service can be fully utilized more effectively. He further directed that the repair work of off-road ambulances should be completed and made operational as soon as possible so that the best medical facilities could be provided to the citizens.

'Pak-Turk-Kazakh Youth Forum' in September

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Three-day 'Pakistan-Turkey-Kazakhstan Youth Forum on Biotechnology' will be arranged in the month of September with emphasis on increasing the share of Muslim countries in biotechnology global market. The forum, to be held from September 13-15, is being sponsored by COMSTECH-the OIC Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation, Islamic Organization for Food Se-

curity (IOFS) and Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), an official of COMSTECH told media. The global biotechnology market is anticipated to reach a market value of US\$ 775 billion by 2024 with an annual growth rate of 7.7%. Increased spending in biotechnology research and development, favorable initiatives by governments, global food security and the increasing need for emerging technologies are some of the factors influencing this growth. Unfortunately, the share of Muslim countries in this global market of biotechnology is very little which needs to be increased. This proposed tripartite youth forum (Pakistan-Turkey-Kazakhstan) will help promote excellence and competence in the field of agricultural biotechnology among Muslim countries. The theme of the forum "Agriculture Biotechnology" aims at providing the best knowledge and resources to young participants to advance their research goals, the official informed.

Lok Virsa, DOAM to hold workshop

ISLAMABAD: Lok Virsa in collaboration with Department of Archaeology & Museums (DOAM) was planning to organize a one-day training workshop on the "Role of Museums in Community Development" on May 18 to mark Int'l Museum Day. National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (LokVirsa) is a specialized institution that deals with Pakistan's traditional culture. – DNA

Tariq Bashir welcomes China's Royal Group investment



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Tariq Bashir Cheema on Tuesday welcomed investment from China's Royal Group and directed the officials concerned to expedite investment process to achieve mutual benefits. The delegation management and top scientists of China's Royal Group met with federal minister and discussed matters related to agriculture and livestock sectors development in the country. The meeting was also attended by senior officials of the ministry including Secretary Ministry of National Food Security Captain (r) Muhammad Asif, said a press release. The delegation discussed business opportunities in Pakistan and briefed the minister that at present, the planned investment projects of the Royal Group was include the buffalo embryos laboratory project, the dairy buffalo farm project, and the buffalo milk deep processing. The minister was told that the dairy sector of Royal Group includes the whole industry chain business, such as forage grass planting, dairy farming, dairy products processing and sales. It has established and controlled 25 standardized dairy breeding bases with an annual dairy production capacity of 500,000 tons. Royal Group owns the only provincial Dairy Technology Research Center, the National Dairy Processing Technology Research and Development Sub-center and Yunnan Enterprise Technology Research Center in Guangxi Province. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: British Ambassador Dr. Christian Turner called Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah Khan. – DNA

Ridiculing institutions, Pak ideology serious crimes

– Justice Ijaz says overthrowing govt through horse trading should be stopped

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court of Pakistan Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail remarked Tuesday that the violation of Article 63(1)(g) was a more serious crime, for it concerned the ridiculing of the judiciary and the army as well as the ideology of Pakistan. He made those remarks during the hearing of a presidential reference seeking interpretation of Article 63-A of the Constitution which concerned disqualification of lawmakers over defection. A five-member larger bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, headed by Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, heard the presidential reference. The bench also comprised Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Mazhar Alam and Justice Munib

Akhtar. During the hearing, the lawyer for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Babar Awan presented his arguments on behalf of party chairman Imran Khan. He argued that those who were defaulting on payment of their utility bills were also not eligible to become members of Parliament. "If the time period is not determined, the disqualification is for life," he contended. At this, Justice Mandokhail asked whether the lawmaker would continue to remain disqualified if they paid their outstanding utility bills before the next election. Justice Ahsan said that the lawmakers' disqualification would end once the outstanding dues are paid. "Only disqualification under Article 62(1)(f) – which sets the precondition for a member of Parliament to be 'honest and righteous' – is

life-long," Justice Ahsan observed. "The disqualification will remain in place until the declaration is cancelled by the court. The disqualification for the non-payment of utility bills cannot be for life," he added. "It is an affront to Article 63-A if a lawmaker is de-seated and then returned to Parliament within 15 days to perhaps become a minister," he stated. Justice Mandokhail asked the counsel to read Article 63(1)(g) of the Constitution. "You are asking us to declare dissident lawmakers disqualified for life," he said to Babar Awan. "It is a serious crime," Awan replied. "In my eyes, the violation of Article 63(1)(g) is a more serious crime. It concerns the ridiculing of the judiciary and the army as well as the ideology of Pakistan," said Justice Mandokhail. "How Article 63-A is related to Article

62(1)(f)," asked Justice Akhtar during the hearing. Awan replied that Article 63-A itself disqualified dissident lawmakers for life. "Should 26 lawmakers be allowed to abandon the party? In this way, the party with the majority will come in the minority," he pointed out. "You want the (interpretation of) Article 63-A to be so rigid that no lawmaker can defect," Justice Ahsan said to Babar Awan. "A 'surgical strike' was inserted in Article 63-A under the 18th Amendment to get rid of the cancer that was defection," argued the PTI counsel. "The 18th Amendment was unanimously passed by Parliament," he added. "The apex court is 'the last hope' and the next move is to take to the streets and stage rallies," he stated. "One says the judiciary should be independent

while another says that it should be subservient to the Constitution. Parliament, the judiciary and the executive should all be subservient to the Constitution," Justice Mandokhail remarked. "Only the judiciary can ensure everyone is subservient to the Constitution," Awan said. "The judiciary not only interprets the Constitution but also makes laws clear with its decisions," he added. After Babar Awan, the lawyer for the Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid (PML-Q), Azhar Siddique, began his arguments. "The British lawmakers resign even if they are suspected of indulging in corruption worth a mere one pound," he told the court. "On the other hand, those disqualified by our courts for not being 'sadiq and ameen' are not ready to accept the verdict," he said.

Decision to ban sugar export hailed

ISLAMABAD: The United Business Group (UBG) in the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Tuesday hailed the prudent decision of the government to enforce complete ban on the export of sugar. Talking to a delegation of traders led by member executive committee Lahore chamber Monin Ali Malik, UBG chairman Shahzad Ali Malik said it was good decision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who took serious notice of the impending threat of acute shortage of sugar in the country and directed his team to impose ban on its exports until domestic needs are fulfilled, besides stressing the urgent need to stabilize the prices. He also urged the government to launch vigorous crackdown against hoarders and profiteers across the country fleeing the poor segments of the society by stocking the commodities. Shahzad requested the government to ban imports of all luxurious items forthwith to narrow down trade deficit and if smuggled be auctioned immediately. He further suggested the Prime Minister for immediate foolproof measures to stop the well-planned wheat smuggling into the neighbouring countries with the connivance of local authorities. – APP

SMEDA, HEC discuss National Idea Labs Programme

LAHORE: Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) has sought support of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to implement its new innovative programme titled as "National Idea Labs" (NIL) for promoting entrepreneurship development in the country. SMEDA CEO HashimRaza, in a meeting with Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr. Tariq Banuri on Tuesday discussed the modalities of the programme that requires a tripartite collaboration of SMEDA-HEC & Higher Education Institutions. The National Idea Lab (NIL) will promote entrepreneurship development and new enterprise creation to nurture and promote the creative ideas of young entrepreneurs, HashimRaza said, adding that the NIL aims to provide a physical as well as virtual environment for generating, developing and commercializing innovative ideas with the help through trainings, mentoring and technology assistance. He called for HEC cooperation to have inputs on networking opportunities, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation of the programme, besides having support of the higher educational institutions through their Business Incubation Centers (BICs). – APP

PNCA to resume Talent Hunt Music edition

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) Tuesday announced to resume its famous 'Talent Hunt' music program by the end of this month. Talking to APP, an official of PNCA Masroor Shah said, Online Talent Hunt music edition, a popular platform for emerging singers. PNCA talent hunt edition was aimed to promote music through weekly music competitions among young singers. He said the programme was an initiative to discover melodious voices and used to be held on a weekly basis audition. The online talent hunt was helping those who were eager to sing but they lack a proper or available platform to perform. He said that LokVirsa would continue its efforts to provide opportunities to talented singers. Itsa new talent program where from across the country singers participating in the competitions in various categories. "The categories include, instrumental performance and singing," he said. PNCA was also providing opportunities to the winners and special nominees in concerts and music functions. – APP

Briefs

ANF recovers over 26.5 kg narcotics; arrests eight

RAWALPINDI: Anti Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting raids in different areas of the country recovered over 26.5 kg narcotics besides netting eight accused. According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, ANF Peshawar acting on a tip-off conducted a raid near 'Karkhano' and netted two accused namely Tariq Khan and Rabnawaz for having 5.1 kg narcotics including 4.8 kg charras and 300 grams Ice. In an operation, ANF Punjab recovered 1 kg heroin from possession of an accused namely Pervaiz Iqbal Khan netted from 'Kalabagh road, Mianwali'. The spokesman informed that ANF Rawalpindi on information conducted a raid and managed to arrest an accused namely Mujtaba Ahmed resident of Attock from Chungi no 26 area and recovered 248 grams heroin from his possession. In another raid, ANF Rawalpindi and ANF Intelligence raided in G/10 Markaz area, Islamabad and rounded up three accused namely Shahid Siddique, Abdul Rehman, residents of Rawalpindi and Abdul Qayyum r/o Khyber Agency with 18,900 kg Ketamine. In an operation, ANF Rawalpindi recovered 1.5 kg Ice at Islamabad International Airport from the possession of a passenger namely Ismail Khan, resident of Peshawar, going to Bahrain through Emirate Airline, flight no 3K-613. - APP

PR lease over 4,600 acres land to generate revenue

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has leased out over 4,603 acres of its land during the last three and half years to transform the department into profitable entity by generating more revenue. "The leased-out land was located in seven divisions including Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi, Multan and Sukkar," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. He also divulged details of a plan, aimed at exploiting 25 mega sites of Pakistan Railways commercially under public-private partnership. An expression of interest to hire the consultant for the purpose was already given in the national and local newspapers of the country, he said. Likewise, he said a second phase was also on the cards under which some 111 new commercial sites were identified for commercial use through public private partnership. To a question, he said Pakistan Railways had also decided to accelerate its ongoing anti-encroachment operation against land grabbers across the country to recoup its land from different individuals, groups and even business organizations using it for residential, commercial and agriculture purposes for decades. "The anti-encroachment operation will be launched with the assistance of Railway Police and district administrations of the provincial governments," he added.

'PTI tried to derail country's democratic process'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Member National Assembly (MNA) Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday said that the PTI tried to derail the democratic process in the country. Talking to a private news channel she said if any member of any political party or any other institution was found guilty against the interest of the country or involved in any unconstitutional activities he/she would not be tolerated. She said the PTI tried to hijack the country by using the Punjab and federal governments through undemocratic ways but on the other hand all political parties presented the no confidence motion against the PTI-led government and ousted them through constitutional process. The MNA urged all political parties to work together to strengthen democratic process which was the only solution to the problems faced by the nation. - APP

AHK interested for investment in Cyber Security Technology

First Secretary, Embassy of Germany in Pakistan Christian Boettcher and Pakistan Representative at German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce (AHK) Muhammad Usman called on Secretary BOI Fareena Mazhar

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce (AHK) on Tuesday expressed interest for investment in Cyber Security Technology in Pakistan. Elaborating the opportunities available in cyber security, Secretary Board of Investment (BOI) Fareena Mazhar shared that Pakistan's Information

Technology (IT) industry is among the top 5 net exporters of the country, said a press release issued here. She said that there is zero Income Tax on IT exports till June 2025 with 100% equity allowed for foreign investors. First Secretary, Embassy of Germany in Pakistan Christian Boettcher and Pakistan Representative at German Emirati Joint Council for Industry and Commerce (AHK) Mu-



hammad Usman called on Secretary BOI Fareena Mazhar in her office today to discuss cyber security technology investment opportunities in Pakistan. During the meeting, the outcomes of recent German delegation's visit to Pakistan were also discussed. The First Secretary informed that three German companies have decided to invest in Pakistan and have already registered themselves. Mr. Boettcher and

Mr. Usman were appreciative of the potential of Pakistan's IT sector and said that they will soon be sharing their business proposals with BOI. They further added that they intend to organize a business event of German companies in Pakistan by the end of June (subject to Covid-19 situation) and shared that the purpose of the event will be match-making with Pakistani SMEs. Another meeting was held

between Secretary BOI and Paul Obers, CEO HATO, Netherlands which was also attended by Rizwan Majeed Khan, CEO, HATO Pakistan, Ms. Lianne Houben, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Netherlands in Pakistan and senior officers of BOI. During the meeting, Deputy Head of Mission highlighted that there are abundant opportunities for investment in agriculture sector of Pakistan. Mr. Obers informed that

HATO wants to setup its second plant in Pakistan for novel animal feed production. He added that the company will initially establish R&D center in Pakistan and requested for BOI's support with regards to land acquisition. Secretary BOI was appreciative of AHK and HATO's interest in the Pakistani market and assured both parties of maximum support and facilitation from the Board of Investment.



ISLAMABAD: Zoobia Masood delivered a lecture on "Drafting Skills" to the FSP officers of the 33rd MCMC. - APP

SAARC Chamber appreciates dispatch of aid for Afghanistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry Tuesday appreciated the good will gesture of Pakistan for immediate dispatching relief goods for Afghan flood affectees and extension of waiver on imports from Afghanistan in Pak rupees. Talking to a delegation of importers and exporters led by Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General United Business Group of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and

Industry, President SAARC Chamber Iftekhar Ali Malik said it was good timely prudent decision of Prime Minister for sending relief goods for flood effected people of Afghanistan. He said Pakistan always attached great importance to Afghanistan by extending assistance and full support in the hours of their trials. He said the decision of Pakistan to extend the facility of waiver on imports from Afghanistan in Pak rupees is also welcomed which he added will help a lot to further promote barter trade

with neighbouring countries. He said it was brought to his notice that government has also constituted a high level committee for framing meaningful and result oriented barter trade policy meeting the requirements of the either neighbouring countries. Iftekhar Ali Malik said it was a matter of great satisfaction that Pakistan since the assumption of new regime in Afghanistan provided maximum assistance and projected their just cause globally in a better way to draw the attention of international players.

MOU with PIDE would give IRS an edge

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the PIDE and the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) in Islamabad today. PIDE was represented by its Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque and President IRS, Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz, formerly Pakistan's envoy to Italy. According to Press Statement issued from the PIDE office, the wide-ranging document covers areas of mutual interest between both institutions. Speaking at the event, the Vice-Chancellor, PIDE, stressed the need to understand Pakistan's regional strategic and economic challenges. - DNA

Taro partners with Muawin to redefine BNPL in Pakistan

LAHORE: In a historic industry first, Taro Technologies, a leading BNPL platform, collaborates with Muawin, Pakistan's first licensed B2B digital lender, to turbocharge Taro's launch. This partnership will allow both FinTechs to integrate and offer seamless financing for both end-customers and merchants across Pakistan. As BNPL growth booms both globally and locally, Pakistan has taken a leading approach, being one of the first countries to require licensing for BNPL financing. This positions Pakistan as a global leader for consumer protection, ensuring BNPL players are offering fair and responsible loans. Knowing this, it becomes clear why this partnership is so critical: it positions Taro to be the first BNPL company able to lend and scale while keeping Pakistani consumers safe. Pakistan is also seeing a lending boom in the B2B space, with Muawin being the forefront leader, signing giants in the gig-economy, retail, and agri verticals. Muawin champions building value through fruitful partnerships which aid financial growth for individuals and small businesses, while increasing financial inclusion in the country. As Muawin focuses on B2B BNPL itself, partnering with Taro will allow them to finance end-consumers while simultaneously opening financing opportunities across merchant supply chains who have traditionally found it hard to avail financing. Muawin's Co-founder, Moeed, while sharing his remarks at the signing event said: "Our mission is clear - to leverage technology and partnerships to provide BNPL financing to the huge new-to-credit market in Pakistan. - APP

Shehryar Munawar reminisce Sinf-e-Aahan journey

ISLAMABAD: The talented actor, film producer and ad-film director Shehryar Munawar bid goodbye to the most appreciated serial Sinf-e-Aahan by sharing heartfelt memories from 'behind the scenes'. Since the last episode of the drama on-air, fans have been all praise about both the drama and the cast. Based upon the remarkable journey of lady cadets, Sinf-e-Aahan truly depicted the definition of 'Women of Steel'. The serial stole all the spotlight

since the launch of its first episode showcasing the valor, strength, heroism and zeal of women in uniform. Debuted as Major Usama in Sinf-e-Aahan, the acclaimed actor Shehryar Munawar recently took it to social media, post-finale episode and shared some beautiful memories from the set of this amazing project. Sharing a few bits moments of the crazy, fun, tough, emotional and memorable journey that Sinf-e-Aahan has been for me. - APP

AIOU conducts first Board meeting for Seerat Chair

ISLAMABAD: The first meeting of the board of management for Seerat-un-Nabi chair, Allama Iqbal Open University was held yesterday. This meeting took place to select topics for the National Seerat Conference, review published and unpublished research on the Seerat Un-Nabi, and determine the main theme and date for the upcoming Seerat conference. This meeting was chaired by Sahibzada Sajid ur Rehman, Head, Seerat-un-Nabi chair, whereas chairman Council for Islamic Ideology, Dr.

Qibla Ayaz, Project management Unit Head / Senior Advisor, Mohammad Rafique Tahir, Head, chair for Iqbal, Prof. Fateh Mohammad Malik, Dr. Aziz Rahman from Dawah Center, Karachi, Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi, Chairman, Department of Seerat Studies, Dr. Shah Moinuddin Hashmi, Director IET, Dr. Samina Awan, Dr. Saeed Ullah from Lahore and Pirzada Bakhtiar Ahmad participated online in the meeting. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Qamar Zaman Kaira Prime Minister Adviser on Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs chairing a meeting to assess damages caused by floods in the area. - DNA

Citizens asked to adopt dengue preventive measures

The rapid growth of the urban population is bringing ever greater numbers of people into contact with this vector, especially in areas that are favorable for mosquito breeding like in areas, where household water storage is common and solid waste disposal services are inadequate, he shared

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Health experts on Tuesday advised citizens of the twin cities to take special preventive measures to protect themselves from the dengue virus. According to them, in the wake of an increasing number of cases, citizens should properly dispose of solid waste and stop water storage practices at their residences to prevent any access to egg-laying female mosquitoes. They said mosquitoes breed pri-

marily in containers like earthenware jars, metal drums, and concrete cisterns used for domestic water storage, as well as discarded plastic food containers, used automobile tyres, and other items that collect rainwater. Medical expert, Dr. Wasim Khawaja explained that dengue is a mosquito-borne infection, which in recent years has become a major public health concern. He said dengue fever is a severe, flu-like illness that affects infants, young children, and adults. Khawaja added the spread of

dengue is attributed to expanding geographic distribution of the four dengue viruses and their mosquito vectors, the most important of which is the predominantly urban species Aedes aegypti. The rapid growth of the urban population is bringing ever greater numbers of people into contact with this vector, especially in areas that are favorable for mosquito breeding like in areas, where household water storage is common and solid waste disposal services are

inadequate, he shared. Dr. Wasim revealed that dengue viruses are transmitted to humans through the bites of infective female Aedes mosquitoes, adding that mosquitoes generally acquire the virus while feeding on the blood of an infected person. He said after virus incubation for eight to ten days, an infected mosquito is capable, during probing and blood feeding, of transmitting the virus to susceptible individuals for the rest of its life. He said the virus circulates in the blood of infected humans for two

to seven days, at approximately the same time as they suffer from fever. He added the clinical features of dengue fever vary according to the age of the patient. Medical expert, Dr. Sharif Astori said infants and young children may have a non-specific febrile illness with a rash as older children and adults may have either a mild febrile syndrome or the classical incapacitating disease with an abrupt onset and high fever, severe headache, joint behind the eyes, muscle and joint pains and rash.

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USC clarifies regarding increase in prices

ISLAMABAD: Utility Stores Corporation (USC) of Pakistan on Tuesday issued clarification regarding the increase in prices. The Federal government provided special subsidy on 19 essential items on all utility stores across the country under the Ramzan relief package since April 1, 2022. Now this subsidy will be continue on the 5 basic items instead of 19 items, said a press release issued here. The subsidy was given on 19 essential items including sugar, flour, ghee, oil, tea, packed milk, white gram, dates, basen, Sella rice, basmati rice, broken rice, lentil mash, moong, chana dal, beverages and spices. After the discontinuation of subsidy on some items prices have reverted to pre-ramzan rates. It is worth mentioning that these products on which no subsidy will be given are much less than normal market prices. The Federal government is providing special subsidies from January 2020 on 5 basic items, it will be continued in the month of May and June 2022, so that the public be given more support. Ghee at Rs 260 per kg, sugar at Rs 70 per kg and 10-kg flour bag will be provided at Rs 400 subsidy on pulses and rice will also be available. - APP

Trend of hosting wedding at home revives

ISLAMABAD: Residents of the twin-cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad have started evening wedding ceremonies at their homes as holding wedding receptions and ceremonies at marriage halls and marques has become very expensive. Arranging marriage events especially 'barat' and 'walima' at marriage halls, marques or alike marriage venues has been trending in the twin-cities for more than a decade, said a stage decorator, who was in this business for about 25 years. However, he said, price hike and inflation have made this trend gradually fade away and now people prefer arranging wedding events at their homes. "I got married 10 years ago, and all the events of my wedding including 'mehndi', 'barat', and 'walima' were hosted at our home. We had erected Shamiana in our street and rooftop to seat the guests for lunch and dinner whereas the arrangements for observing marriage traditions and customs were made inside the house. Marriages of all my siblings were held in the same fashion," a resident of Allama Iqbal Colony, Umair Javed, 35 told APP. Another citizen said at a wedding ceremony in Bhara kahu that it's the marriage ceremony of his 24-year-old son. "Marriage venues such as wedding halls, marques, and hotels have gone beyond the reach of middle-class families. That's why I decided to hosted the ceremony at my home." - APP

NPO to organize webinar on 'RM & MP' on May 19

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) will organize a webinar on "Risk Management and Mitigation Plan (RM&MP)" on May 19 (Thursday). The objective of the workshop includes reduce schedule impacts, reduce development cost, increase system performance, ensure proper communication and determine risk priorities, according to NPO document. The workshop also provides information about risk assessment, process of risk assessment, roles and responsibilities, methodology of hazard and risk assessment, hierarchy of control and personal protective equipment, communication of hazard and risk assessment, record management, hands on drill on hazard and risk assessment and activities on hazard and risk assessment. The programme has been designed for senior management, middle management, team leaders and supervisors.

How does this help anybody?

It seems it's only a matter of time before somebody within PTI advises Imran Khan to talk less in public. For, in a manner with only one vague parallel in the country's political history, PTI workers are now more often than not running to put out fires inadvertently lit by the party chief, just like MQM spokespersons used to do once upon a time. The latest is the newest revelation about why the transfer of the former ISI chief became such a big deal. Imran Khan's admission that he wanted General Faiz around a little longer because he was aware of the machinations of the opposition has left more egg on his and his party's face than anybody in the opposition or the establishment.

No doubt such a thing is not new, and politicians have depended on the intelligence apparatus for the longest time, but for a mainstream politician and one time PM to say such things in the open can only serve to widen the cleavage between his party and the more important institutions of the state. It also exposes PTI's incredible story about the foreign conspiracy as something that was most likely stitched up much later. That's why everybody in the party, from the rank and file to the very top brass, is now busy spinning Imran Khan's comment about the intel chief, and what it implies for charges of hybrid regime, etc, into something that makes PTI look like the only saving grace for Pakistan's future.

How this helps PTI, especially considering the impressive way it's been able to generate so much momentum in such little time, is very hard to see. It was already struggling to refute allegations of being first selected and then abandoned by the establishment, and now the party head has himself confirmed how he was relying on the premier intelligence agency to continue serving as his "eyes as ears" as a political storm – a perfectly legitimate one, by the way – was brewing. That the military would distance itself from all such things was pretty obvious, and it's even issued a stern warning against dragging it into political disputes.

There's not much to suggest that things will get much clearer in the coming days.

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Putin's Victory Day speech

When Vladimir Putin launched what was intended as a blitzkrieg attack on Kyiv in February, he would have assumed that annual May celebrations of the Soviet victory over nazism would merge with a more contemporary triumph. Things have not worked out that way.

The protracted troubles of the Russian army meant that Monday's Victory Day parade of military might was smaller than usual. The usual fly-past, which in honour of the current war was to feature a Z formation of MiG-29 fighters, was unexpectedly cancelled. In some Russian cities, traditional symbols had been adapted to place the years 1945 and 2022 side by side. But there has been no victory in Ukraine – from where President Volodymyr Zelenskiy gave his own Victory Day speech, rejecting the cultural appropriation of the Soviet resistance by Moscow.

The abject failure of the Kremlin's strategy, and the humiliation inflicted on Russian forces, led to speculation that Mr Putin would use his traditional address to escalate matters still further. Thankfully, this did not happen. All dimly predictable and re-hashed. But perhaps more tellingly, Mr Putin's speech also made a rare reference to Russian casualties sustained in the conflict that he unilaterally provoked. Since March, no information has been released by Moscow on the number of troops killed, wounded or captured in Ukraine – but the figure is likely to run into the tens of thousands. Acknowledging "irreparable loss for relatives and friends", Mr Putin announced that support would be put in place for the children of the dead and for the wounded. Back home, so far, practised authoritarian methods and relentless propaganda on state media have been doing their job.

Internal dissent has been ruthlessly suppressed and criminalised, and an initial burst of anti-war demonstrations was quickly quelled with more than 15,000 protesters detained. According to a survey conducted by the Novaya Gazeta newspaper – which has suspended publication in Russia in protest at censorship – Mr Putin enjoys patriotic approval ratings of over 80%. But the same poll finds deep anxiety and apprehension regarding his war. This unease is not yet a problem for the Putin regime. But as economic hardship gradually deepens and an attritional conflict drags on with no end in sight, it may yet become one.

The US goes ballistic: America's gun epidemic

Belen Fernandez

Media fact-checking incompetence aside, the quote remains valid – and the whole "casual attitude" has no doubt proved helpful over the course of contemporary US history in justifying massacres of civilians from Vietnam to Iraq and beyond. Naturally, however, the US political establishment has little interest in connecting the dots – or the bullet holes, as the case may be – between militarised sociopathy abroad and at home

While in Havana this past February, I made the acquaintance of a man in his mid-fifties, who hailed from the eastern Cuban province of Guantánamo and who in 1986 had endeavoured unsuccessfully to sail on a makeshift boat from Cuba to the so-called "land of the free": my own homeland, the United States. Apprehended by Cuban authorities, he was sentenced to three years of labour on a coffee farm – where, he said, he was treated in a reasonably civilised fashion, and where he was able to put his mechanical engineering degree to use by designing a coffee de-pulping machine.

hell out of civilians in Iraq or Afghanistan, and even though Guantánamo constitutes a form of terror in its own right. But while the US government casts almost everything the US itself does as being in the name of "freedom" and "security", the fact of the matter is that Cubans have access to a literal security that is unavailable to residents of the imperial superpower. When I googled "mass shootings in Cuba", for example, the top result was an April 2020 Associated Press article about 42-year-old Alexander Alazo of Aubrey, Texas, who, armed with an AK-47 assault rifle, had opened fire on the Cuban Embassy in Washington, DC. As per the

police writeup, the episode was a "suspected hate crime".

And yet Mr Alazo's escapades are merely the tip of the iceberg – or the tip of the rifle barrel – when it comes to gun violence in the United States, humanity's self-appointed role model. Over Easter weekend this April, CNN reported "at least 10 mass shootings" across the country – with the term "mass shooting" referring to an "incident in which four or more people are shot, not including the shooter".

The Easter tally comprised two mass shootings in the state of Pennsylvania alone, one of which transpired at a house party in Pittsburgh and resulted in the deaths of two 17-year-olds, in addition to numerous injuries. South Carolina hosted two mass shootings of its own, one at a shopping mall in the state capital of Columbia that left nine people with bullet wounds. Mass shootings also took place in California, Florida, Maryland, Nevada, New York, and Oregon.

This particularly bloody weekend came just days after 10 people were shot in the subway in Brooklyn on April 12. Rewind a few weeks to CNN headlines from March – eg, "At least 8 people were killed and more than 60 hurt in mass shootings across the US this weekend", published March 21 – and there does indeed appear to be a trend. Fast forward again to May, and the Washington, DC-based Gun Violence Archive had already recorded no fewer than 173 mass shootings this year as of May 2. The catalogue of horrifying statistics goes on. According to the US government's Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, the country registered 45,222 "firearm deaths" in 2020 – even more than the 40,698 "motor vehicle traffic deaths". This was the highest number of gun-related deaths on record for any single year thus far, and repre-

sented a 43 percent increase from 2010. Of the 45,222 deaths, approximately 54 percent were suicides and 43 percent homicides. The remainder, the Pew Research Centre notes, had either been "unintentional", entailed "undetermined circumstances", or "involved law enforcement" personnel – who certainly conducted their fair share of extrajudicial killings of Black Americans and others in 2020. How's that for "security"? A recent offering on the BBC News website, titled: "America's gun culture – in seven charts", reminisces ironically: "It was over 50 years ago when the administration of President Lyndon Baines Johnson declared that 'firearms are a primary instrument of death in American crime' and that it was 'primarily the result of our culture's casual attitude towards firearms and its heritage of the armed, self-reliant citizen.'" In reality, the quote – which actually describes firearms as an "instrument of injury and death", not just death – occurred in the context of a 1969 congressional subcommittee hearing on firearms legislation under Johnson's successor Richard Nixon.

Media fact-checking incompetence aside, the quote remains valid – and the whole "casual attitude" has no doubt proved helpful over the course of contemporary US history in justifying massacres of civilians from Vietnam to Iraq and beyond. Naturally, however, the US political establishment has little interest in connecting the dots – or the bullet holes, as the case may be – between militarised sociopathy abroad and at home. The "armed, self-reliant citizen" has meanwhile become ever more so, especially as various states have enacted ingenious laws allowing residents to carry handguns with no permit or training. As of 2017, there were already "more guns than people" in the US, the Washington Post reported, citing a study according to which there were an "estimated 120.5

guns for every 100 residents" – by far the most outrageous ratio in the world. Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit, prompting a surge in US firearms purchases – because what better than a gun to protect you from a virus and general existential uncertainty? The attendant spike in gun-related suicides and homicides served to underscore how much more preferable it would be – in terms of, you know, human life – for the US state to invest in the mental and physical wellbeing of its population rather than cultivating a cutthroat capitalist landscape that makes folks go ballistic. Of course, a sick society is ultimately more profitable for such pillars of US capitalism as the arms and pharmaceutical industries, whose own security definitively trumps the sort of security described by my Cuban interlocutor – like the freedom to not be shot while going about your daily business.

I experienced an inkling of this sickness firsthand growing up in the US, where I was taught that life was a competition as opposed to a communal collaboration – a dog-eat-dog arrangement that intermittently spawned in me feelings of anxiety, isolation, impotence, and directionless rage. Decades before the pandemic exacerbated matters, I disentangled myself from the hostile environment by simply abandoning the country – and yet it is not difficult to see how a violent and thoroughly alienating system might also elicit more violent individual responses. On March 23, 2022, following a single weekend that featured "at least nine mass shooting events" across the US, the New York Times warned that it was "an ominous harbinger for the warmer summer months ahead, which is typically America's most violent time". But as times get ever more violent, it is not just this summer that we have to dread.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Has Ukraine conflict left the NATO alliance divided?

Ozden Zeynep Oktav

The UK's ability to use "democracy" as a bargaining chip to pressure Germany and France to serve Anglo-Saxon interests is also noteworthy. For example, the UK has seized the opportunity to raise its voice as a defender of democracy and freedom and reaffirm the role of a "great power" that Britain has been looking to play since World War II

No, Muslims critical of Prevent are not 'enabling terrorism' Why do the four major NATO allies have different views and what do some cases tell us about the future of the organisation? On April 4, amid Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine, NATO turned 73. An old man guarding liberty and democracy in a world at war. Over the past several weeks, the Ukraine conflict has seen the 30-nation security alliance come together—especially the US, UK, France and Germany—against a common "enemy" in Russian President

Vladimir Putin. But on closer look, no one can miss the bandages that are holding the grouping together. The ravages of time and age appear to be catching up with NATO.

French President Emmanuel Macron's 2019 description of NATO as "braindead" is ringing through the visible signs of divisions within the grouping as the Ukraine conflict drags on.

Despite the show of unity, it will be quite challenging for the NATO powers to stay on the same diplomatic page through the crisis.

The 2021 AUKUS deal between the US and UK, which broke the submarine contract between France and Australia, had incurred Paris's wrath. French officials accused Australia, the US, and the UK of behaving in a duplicitous manner that betrayed and humiliated France. According to France, the AUKUS deal was far more than just

a diplomatic spat; it was a complete failure of trust between allies and doubted what NATO exists for.

For NATO, the Ukraine conflict was seen as the best hope for the allies to mend fences.

For example, the UK – which was charting a new course since Brexit – is now standing shoulder-to-shoulder with its old allies in the EU in supporting Ukraine over Russia.

However, the issue is whether the conflict in Ukraine will have a long-lasting gluing effect on the Western NATO allies. Put differently, it is a primary con-

cern of Washington whether the conflict will serve as a backdrop to strengthen trans-Atlantic cooperation.

The divergent individual interests of the four major NATO powers have been visible through the Ukraine conflict.

Germany is a case in point. Despite the bold declaration of "Zeitenwende" – which means a turning point in its foreign policy – that led to suspension of the Nord Stream 2 project, a massive boost in defence spending, and a promised end to Russian energy imports, Germany continues to rely on Russian oil and gas.

From Washington's perspective, Germany's dependence on Russian energy would always put Germans at the mercy of Russia. The US' fears were threefold. Firstly, it was apprehensive that Germany's dependence on Russian oil and gas would enhance Moscow's regional importance at the expense of Berlin's relations with Washington when the US became the world's largest gas producer and a global player in gas markets.

Second, Germany's improving relations with Russia would threaten trans-Atlantic cooperation. Third, Germany and France's hesitancy over sanctions on Russia and their reluctance to provide Ukraine with heavy weaponry could deepen the diverging interests among NATO allies.

The worst-case scenario for Germany and France is a prolonged Ukraine-Russia conflict – with the US and UK making more and more provocative statements against Putin and waging a proxy war by sending heavy artillery, ammunition, and drones to Ukraine to bring about a "grinding war" that nobody wins.

Such a war of attrition would spill across borders and automatically threaten the

European continent rather than the US, whose main aim is to keep Russia busy in Ukraine and thus lessen the Kremlin's military influence in Syria, the East Mediterranean and Libya.

Is Germany an outlier? Speaking at a joint news conference with European Parliament President Roberta Metsola in Berlin, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said European countries should carefully assess the sanctions on the Kremlin.

Warning that "sanctions should have an effect on the aggressor, but at the same time, we should make sure that they have minimal repercussions for our economies, and we should be able to uphold them." Scholz drew attention to the fact that the ongoing conflict in Ukraine could destabilise European economy and security.

Interestingly, Scholz's refusal to travel to Ukraine after President Zelenskiy rebuked German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier clearly shows that Germany is seen as an outlier than the others, including Boris Johnson, who paid a visit to Kiev.

The UK's ability to use "democracy" as a bargaining chip to pressure Germany and France to serve Anglo-Saxon interests is also noteworthy. For example, the UK has seized the opportunity to raise its voice as a defender of democracy and freedom and reaffirm the role of a "great power" that Britain has been looking to play since World War II.

Much more realistic and threatening is the UK and US's policy of holding democracy and human rights as the Damocles sword over these two pivot countries; Germany and France.

Both have no choice but to make a pref-

erence between the two alternatives. One is to support Washington's policy of moving weapons and equipment to Ukraine at "record speed" and applying sanctions on Russia to rescue Ukrainian civilians from Russia's assaults.

The second is to continue energy relations with Russia under Putin, prioritising their economic interests at the expense of being stigmatised as an outlier, anti-democratic at a time when the Bucha incident has put an end to the prospect of a peaceful resolution – the first steps of which were taken in Istanbul, Türkiye – to the war in Ukraine.

The differing views in Berlin, Washington, Paris and London on dealing with Putin's aspiration to rebuild a sphere of influence in ex-Soviet territories have always been in flux, with different capitals taking different views at various points. The Ukraine conflict is not only a part of the general western perception of Russia, which fulfils the role of being the "other" but is also a severe test to understanding the durability of the unity of the West or NATO.

In a nutshell, leaving aside futurology, two points should be stressed: first, NATO has not been designed to withstand proxy conflicts – Germany against the Russian Federation, France against the AUKUS, Ukraine against Belarus and the Russian Federation. All these have severely weakened the alliance and endangered world peace.

Second, NATO is in a risky situation because of differences in security or foreign relations issues between member states and because of their domestic compulsions. After all, every country rides out the rough on a simple principle: safety first.

Courtesy: TRT World

Briefs

Army and PTI keeping Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01

by a foreign conspiracy and the most corrupt people of the country are installed as rulers, he pointed out. But the induction of the corrupt elite once again has woken up our nation, he said. Taking to JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman he said that the JUI-F chief took the communications ministry to make money out of road and construction tenders. He said that the whole new cabinet is full of absconders and accused including Shehbaz Shareef and Zardari. The PML-N leadership is going to meet their absconder leader with the taxpayers' money, he said. Imran Khan said that Shehbaz Shareef should be ashamed of accusing him of insulting the Army. Shehbaz Shareef and his brothers are the real Mir Jaffer and Mir Sadiq, he clarified. The PTI chairman said that it is Pakistan Army and the PTI that is keeping the country intact, which is why our enemies campaign against us both. PTI is the only federal party that can do powerful public displays across the country. All other parties combined cannot fill the Minar-e-Pakistan. Imran Khan said that his everything is in the country, and he wishes that the government puts him on the Exit Control List (ECL), because he does not wish to escape the country. He said that Nawaz Shareef made 24, while Zardari made 50 personal visits on taxpayers' money when they were in power.

Khan urges SC to...

FROM PAGE 01

statement comes after the federal government issued the notification in the early hours of Tuesday, on the heels of a "strong rejection" of a summary by President Arif Alvi calling for Cheema's removal from the governor's office. "Imported puppets are stirring up constitutional anarchy and chaos in Punjab," Imran said. "First, a criminal puppet was imposed on the province as a chief minister through a ghost election. Now, keeping all constitutional requirements aside, the office of the president has been insulted." He condemned what he termed as an embarrassing attempt to remove the Punjab governor because of his insistence on protecting the Constitution. The former premier said that the "blatant violation" of the Constitution in Punjab was being watched in silence, therefore, the Supreme Court must take suo motu notice of the situation, given its sensitivity.

Govt mulls to resume...

FROM PAGE 01

were going to visit Nawaz in London, which she said the government's opponents were blowing out of proportion. "PML-N members are going on a private visit to London to meet with Nawaz Sharif," she said, adding that PM Shehbaz would also be travelling for this purpose. However, the minister appeared to downplay the matter by saying that the process of consultation was not unusual among political parties. "This is not that big of an issue but those who have nothing to say and nothing to show for their performance [...] have found a topic." The information minister also emphasised that a PML-N delegation was going to meet with Nawaz for consultations, which was an ongoing process.

Macron warns...

FROM PAGE 01

in denial, nor in exclusion of each other, nor even in humiliation." Macron also laid out his vision of a broader community of European democracies that would allow for deeper cooperation between non-EU countries. Within this new political union, nations like Ukraine and even the UK could be a part of it.

German FM vows 'justice' for Bucha on surprise Ukraine visit

"We owe it to the victims to not only commemorate here, but to also hold the perpetrators accountable. This is what we are going to do as the international community," she said

FOREIGN DESK

KYIV: German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and her Dutch counterpart Wopke Hoekstra visited war-torn areas around Kyiv on Tuesday on a surprise trip to Ukraine. Both visits were unannounced, with Baerbock visiting Bucha, a town which has become synonymous with allegations of Russian war crimes after dozens of bodies in civilian clothing were found in the streets. After talks with locals, the German minister said Bucha was a place where "the worst crimes imaginable have happened", promising to "hold accountable" those responsible. "We owe it to the victims to not only commemorate here, but to also hold the perpetrators accountable. This is what we are going to do as the international community, that's the promise that we can and must give here in Bucha," she said. "No one can take away the pain... but we can ensure justice," she said, accompanied on her visit by Ukraine's attorney general who is investigating the killings.



Separately, Hoekstra tweeted that he had arrived during the morning "in Kyiv for meetings with the Ukrainian government, together with my colleague Annalena Baerbock". "Started my visit in Irpin, a suburb of Kyiv," he wrote of another town near Bucha where Russian troops are alleged to have carried out atrocities, posting pictures of himself near war-scarred buildings. "The bombed-out houses and buildings illustrate the impact the war has had on the lives of the men, women and children who live here. These acts cannot go unpunished," he tweeted, saying his government was involved in "several accountability efforts". The Netherlands was helping through "financial contributions to the investigations by the International Criminal Court and the UN commission of inquiry, and through the deployment of a forensic team in Ukraine," he said. Hoekstra was due to meet later in the day with his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba and with President Volodymyr Zelensky, a spokesman from the Dutch foreign ministry said.

EU holds donor conference for Syrian refugees

BRUSSELS: The European Union hosted the "Brussels VI Conference on supporting the future of Syria and the region" on Tuesday to collect donations for the Syrian refugees and the countries hosting them. "Despite a war at our doorstep, the European Union does not forget other conflicts," the EU's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement ahead of the Brussels conference, referring to the war in Ukraine. "Millions of people inside Syria and in the region depend every day on humanitarian assistance," Borrell said. More than 13 million people either fled Syria or were internally displaced since the beginning of the conflict in 2011, according to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Some 5.6 million Syrians have found refuge in neighboring and nearby countries, the UNHCR reports, with many living in poverty. The conference is the 10th annual donor conference for Syrians since 2013. After conferences

in Kuwait and London, Brussels has been hosting the events since 2017. Last year's conference raised 5.3 billion (\$5.6 billion), of which 3.7 billion came from the European Commission and EU member states. Since the beginning of the war in 2011, the EU and its member states have donated 27.4 billion for humanitarian assistance to Syria and the region, according to the commission. Over 13 million displaced Syrians face challenges, as some hosting countries call for their return to an unsafe Syria, Haya Atassi, the media manager of the Syrian Association for Citizens' Dignity said. "Most of these calls and initiatives are based on ill-conceived ideas or directly promoted by domestic political agendas. They are all leading to one inevitable type of ad-hoc and unsustainable solutions that will cause displaced Syrians further suffering and despair..." she said, adding that the participants of the conference should keep this in mind when proposing future solutions. - APP

Yoon Suk-yeol sworn in as S.Korea's new president

SEOUL: Yoon Suk-yeol of the biggest conservative People Power Party on Tuesday was sworn in as South Korea's 20th president. The inaugural ceremony was held in the National Assembly plaza, attended by over 40,000 ordinary people as well as dignitaries. Yoon started his career as a public prosecutor at the age of 35, after failing to pass a bar exam for nine years. Yoon gained fame and went from strength to strength with his investigation into political heavyweights and business tycoons. He apprehended close aides to former President Roh Moo-hyun for violating the political fund law, a brother of former President Lee Myung-bak for breaching the political fund law, and Chung Mong-koo, former chairman of the country's second-largest family-run conglomerate Hyundai Motor Group, in a slush fund case. Yoon was demoted in 2013 when he led a special investigation team to probe into the involvement of the National Intelligence Service (NIS), the country's spy agency, in the public opinion manipulation scandal. "I love the prosecution office. I have no loyalty to any person," Yoon left his well-known words during a parliamentary inspection in 2013, acquiring a nickname of "sturdy prosecutor" from local media and a full support from lawmakers of the then main liberal opposition Democratic Party. Yoon secured an opportunity to re-

store his fame in late 2016. He became the head of the investigation team of an independent look ed enced scandal involving Park Geun-hye and her



dante Choi Soon-sil. It led to the impeachment of Park in March 2017. In May 2017, the newly-elected President Moon Jae-in named Yoon as chief of the Seoul Central District Prosecutor's Office, enabling Yoon to come back to one of the highest prosecution positions in a dazzling way. Yoon's office reinvestigated the NIS public opinion manipulation case, finding out the involvement of the police

and even the defense ministry. His office also arrested former President Lee Myung-bak for bribery and Yang Sung-tae, former chief justice of the Supreme Court, for abuse of power. The liberal Democratic Party supporters extolled Yoon as a hero who saved the country, while conservatives vilified him as a traitor who destroyed the conservative bloc. The public sentiment was completely overturned before long. President Moon appointed Yoon as prosecutor general in July 2019, ordering Yoon to strictly investigate corruptions even relevant to the incumbent government. It was the unprecedentedly fast promotion, leading to the resignation of several high-ranking prosecutors. Shortly after the appointment, Yoon started a probe into the family of Justice Minister Cho Kuk, one of close aides to President Moon and former senior presidential secretary for civil affairs, over a series of controversies that include the alleged forgery of academic achievements of his daughter. Tens of prosecutors and investigators reportedly raided about 100 locations, including Cho's home, provoking harsh criticism from the Democratic Party supporters, hundreds of thousands of whom held candlelight rallies on a main road beside the building of Yoon's office and demanded his resignation as prosecutor general.

Erdogan reiterates determination for new constitution

AGENCIES

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reiterated the government's plans for a new constitution in Turkey. "We maintain our will to save our nation from the current Constitution, which is the product of a coup," Erdogan said at a ceremony in the capital Ankara marking the 154th anniversary of the country's top administrative court. Erdogan has been pushing for a new constitution to be drafted under civilian rule to replace the current one introduced after a military coup in 1980. At the event, he underscored his government's multiple attempts in parliament to introduce a new constitution, drafted with a democratic approach and written in plain language. "With this aim, we even led the formation of a parliamentary committee with an equal number of members from all parties," he said, adding that this was thwarted because of the "irreconcilable and obstructive attitude" of the opposition parties. However, he vowed to pass "a civilian, libertarian, and inclusive



constitution" when the opportunity arises. Underlining that changing the Constitution and other laws is not a bad thing, Erdogan stressed that the quality of the enforcer "is as vital as the accuracy of the laws." "Rule of law is a sine qua non of democracy," the president stressed. "As a politician who suffered from many unlawful imputations, harassment, and penalties, I have been striving to strengthen the rule of law in Turkey since the day I took office." "Through the reforms we made, we have consolidated the rule of law across a wide area from the Constitution to laws, from administrative practices to international conventions," he added. Since 1982, the current Constitution, drafted following a military coup, has seen several amendments. The bloody 1980 coup, which led to the detention of hundreds of thousands of people along with mass trials, torture and executions, still represents a dark period in Turkish political history. Erdogan wants Turkey to have a civilian-drafted constitution by 2023, coinciding with the centenary of the foundation of the Republic of Turkey.

Swiatek ready for title defence in Rome

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Iga Swiatek said she feels like a different player from a year ago and will go into her Italian Open title defence having cemented herself at the top of the women's game following a blistering start to the season. The 20-year-old, who went from being an unknown teenager to acquiring celebrity status after capturing a maiden Grand Slam title at the 2020 French Open, triumphed in Rome last year by hammering Karolina Pliskova 6-0, 6-0 in the final. Replacing Ash Barty at the top of the world rankings following the Australian's shock retirement in March, Swiatek has adjusted well to the pressure of having a target on her back. She skipped this year's Madrid Open because of a shoulder injury and arrives at the venue of her first WTA 1000 crown looking to add to titles in Doha, Indian Wells, Miami and Stuttgart and extend her 23-match winning run. "I feel like I'm a different player right now. Last year... I still was trying to find some kind of consistency in the wins I had and also confirmation that Roland Garros wasn't just like a (one-off) tournament," Swiatek told reporters. "I feel like I found that and I can move for-

ward and focus on my next goals. For sure, the tournaments I played this year have shown me that I can play better tennis on hard courts. "Right now the transition that I have to do to clay, it's different because usually it was like, 'whoa, clay, finally I can play well'." Right



now... I feel like my level was high anyway. It didn't, like, strike me this year." Swiatek said the break after Stuttgart helped her stay fresh. "I had five or six days off without the racquet, which was nice," said Swiatek, who faces either Shelby Rogers or Alison Riske.

President for probe...

FROM PAGE 01

president wrote a letter to former prime minister Imran Khan, insisting that an investigation should be carried out into the matter. He wrote that he had read the copy of the cypher sent by the then ambassador of Pakistan to the United States. The cypher contained an official summary of a meeting held in the Pakistan Embassy between Donald Lu, US Assistant Secretary of State, along with another US official, the Pakistani ambassador, a note-taker, and other diplomats of the Pakistan Mission. The president added that the report in the cypher included some statements made by Lu in quotes specifically mentioning a "no-confidence motion" against the former PM, and also mentioned "forgiveness" if it succeeded, and "dire consequences" if the said motion failed. In the letter, President Alvi referred to the two meetings of the National Security Committee (NSC) that had endorsed that statements made by Lu amounted to "unacceptable and blatant interference" in the internal affairs of Pakistan and its government had rightly issued a demarche. The president also underscored that threats could both be covert and overt and in this particular case, it was clearly communicated in undiplomatic language. He noted that the PTI chairman had raised serious issues of possible covert reactions and ramifications of the threat. The letter also said that the president was of the belief that for a sovereign nation and people, whose dignity had been deeply hurt, in-depth analysis and investigation must be carried out to inquire into what may or may not have been a preparation, starting before or following the overt threat, for a possible conspiracy to change Pakistan's regime. Highlighting the history of Pakistan - when people had alleged and strongly believed in many obvious but unproven conspiracies - the president cited the examples of the murder of the first PM of Pakistan Shaheed Liaquat Ali Khan in Rawalpindi, the Agartala Conspiracy case, former PM Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's public waving of a letter and allegation of a conspiracy against him, former president Ziaul Haq's plane crash, Ojheri disaster, Abbottabad Conspiracy case, and many others that remained inconclusive.

Cabinet approves...

FROM PAGE 01

in future. Last date for the cancellation of dual foreign passport is 31 December of this year. She said till the date all procedural and administrative arrangements will be finalized to take legal action against dual foreign passport holders. The cabinet also decided to continue the fixed rates of flour and sugar under the Ramadan package. Under the package, a 20 kg bag of flour was reduced from 950 rupees to 800 rupees, similarly sugar was reduced from 85 rupees per kg to 70 rupees per kg.

Pakistan condemns...

FROM PAGE 01

deep regret that loudspeakers are being removed from mosques across various states in India under the pretext of ensuring communal harmony. The outhing of Muslims in India and exclusionary policies aimed at denying their fundamental right to profess and practice their religion, only expose the deep-seated anti-Muslim prejudices in the Indian state and society. He said Pakistan calls upon the Indian government to transparently investigate the incidents of widespread violence against minorities, particularly Muslims, and their places of worship and take measures to stop such incidents from recurring in the future. He said India must ensure the safety, security and well-being of minorities. The spokesperson said Pakistan also calls on the international community to take note of the aggravating situation of Islamophobia in India, and play its due role in ensuring the religious freedom and safety of the beleaguered Muslim community residing in India.

Tokayev's visit to Turkiye marks new era

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: The first official visit to Turkiye by Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, which began on Tuesday, is expected to herald a new era in the two countries' relations. Tokayev, who took office after founding President Nursultan Nazarbayev stepped down in 2019, is paying an official two-day visit to the Turkish capital Ankara. The visit comes as the countries mark 30 years since they established ties on March 2, 1992. It will include a joint news conference between Tokayev and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan following an official ceremony at Presidential Complex, the signing of various agreements, and face-to-face and inter-delegation meetings. At the talks, the sides will discuss measures to increase bilateral trade volume from the current \$5 billion to \$10 billion, as well as new opportunities to expand areas of cooperation.



Turkiye was among Kazakhstan's top five foreign trade partners last year, while investments by Turkish companies in the Central Asian country reached a record level. Over the last year, Turkey has invested \$362.4 million in Kazakhstan, with the 30-

central Asian country reached a record level. Over the last year, Turkey has invested \$362.4 million in Kazakhstan, with the 30-

year total at \$4 billion. Kazakh investment in Turkiye has exceeded \$1 billion. Their mutual trade volume has risen up to \$5 billion from \$30 million three decades ago. Turkiye was the first country to recognize Kazakhstan as independent in 1991, with the two nations establishing diplomatic relations in a matter of months. Ankara has also pioneered the establishment of the first diplomatic mission in Kazakhstan, opening an embassy in Almaty, then the capital of the Central Asian country. Bilateral ties continue to develop in all areas, with the Kazakh Embassy in Ankara starting operations in October 1992. Relations reached a high point with the signing of a strategic partnership agreement between the two nations in 2009. In 2012, they established a high-level strategic cooperation council. The countries cooperate extensively in the fields of politics, economy, trade, investment, military, defense industry, education, and health, having since achieved significant progress in their 30 years of ties.

Briefs

Russian FM visits Algeria

DNA

ALGIERS: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday landed in Algeria as the two countries mark the 60th anniversary since the establishment of diplomatic relations. In a Twitter post, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Lavrov held talks with Algerian Minister of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad Ramtane Lamamra. Lavrov "took part in the wreath-laying ceremony at the monument to the heroes of the Algerian War of Independence," the ministry added. Russian media, meanwhile, said Lavrov will hold talks with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune during his visit to the North African nation. In a brief report, the state-run Algerian International Channel said Lavrov is "on a working visit" that "comes on the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Algeria and Russia."

However, there were no official statements on the files that will be discussed during the top Russian diplomat's to Algeria. An Algerian presidency statement on April 18 said Tebboune held talks with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, over the phone, during which they "agreed on the importance of exchanging high-level visits between officials of the two countries, and the upcoming meeting of the joint committee for economic cooperation."

Hamas warns Israel over leadership assassinations

GAZA: Member of Hamas's political bureau Zaher Jabarin has warned the Israeli occupation state of just thinking of carrying out its assassination threats against any Palestinian resistance leader, stressing that any harm coming to them would be like a "declaration of war" against his Movement. "If the occupation touched any resistance leader, especially Sheikh Salah al-Aruri, this would be treated as a declaration of war, and the resistance would respond and would not let the occupation overstep the limits," Jabarin stated in press remarks published on Monday by Hurrya News.

"Every one of our Palestinian people is prone to get killed by this occupation state. However, we cannot be more precious than our children, youth and women in all parts of the homeland," he said. The Hamas official also warned that it is delusional for the occupation state to believe that it could end the resistance through its assassination policy, affirming that the resistance would not stand idly by towards Israel's crimes in Jerusalem, Jenin and other areas of the occupied territories, as well as towards its violations against the Palestinian prisoners in its jails. - Agencies

Lithuania officially calls Russia's war on Ukraine 'genocide'

ANKARA: Lithuania's parliament on Tuesday voted unanimously to recognize Russia's war against Ukraine as "genocide," according to the Baltic country's public broadcaster.

"Russia's armed forces and mercenaries have committed mass war crimes on Ukrainian territory, in particular in Bucha, Irpin, Mariupol, Borodyanka, and Hostomel," Lithuanian National Radio and Television (LRT) quoted the resolution as saying. Lithuania's parliament "recognizes the full-scale armed aggression - war - against Ukraine by the armed forces of the Russian Federation and its political and military leadership ... as genocide against the Ukrainian people," the resolution said.

The resolution stressed that all perpetrators must be held accountable and urged the international community to establish a special international criminal tribunal to investigate crimes committed by Russia.

"The Russian Federation, whose military forces deliberately and systematically target civilian targets, is a state that supports and perpetrates terrorism," the resolution said. - Agencies

Heydar Aliyev, Architect of modern Azerbaijan

In 1987, after removal of Heydar Aliyev from all positions without any grounds, Azerbaijan lost a huge pillar. From that time on, a great injustice was shown against Azerbaijani people and republic. As a result, Azerbaijan was faced with a deep internal political crisis

DNA

BAKU: May 10th was the 99th birthday of the national leader of Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev. Today the Azerbaijani nation is once again expressing their respect and gratitude for the fond memory of the great leader. Heydar Aliyev, a great leader of Azerbaijani nation, who was a brilliant personality, a visionary leader and a brave man, made an exceptional contribution to the history of the country and played a great role in the formation of modern Azerbaijan statehood. He devoted his entire life to his nation and always served the people with dignity.

Both in the Soviet times and in the years of independence, in the most crucial moments for Azerbaijan and its people, the leadership qualities of Heydar Aliyev, his wisdom, thoughtful policy and bold steps saved Azerbaijani nation from great troubles. The people of the country believed in him, loved him and always supported him. Thanks to

Heydar Aliyev's leadership in Azerbaijan during the Soviet period, the republic developed successfully and rapidly. In July 1969, Heydar Aliyev was elected the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Azerbaijan and became the head of the Republic, which was one of the most backward republics of the Soviet Union. As a result of 13 years of tireless work of Heydar Aliyev, Azerbaijan became one of the most advanced republics of the Soviet Union.

In above-mentioned period that a high pace of industrial development was achieved in Azerbaijan. The infrastructure created at that time still serves the development of the independent Azerbaijan today.

Heydar Aliyev's principled position and personal qualities were highly valued by the Soviet leadership. That's why he was appointed as the first deputy chairman of the Council of the Ministers of the Soviet Union in December 1982. While working in this position, Heydar Aliyev led the



most important areas of the USSR economic, social and cultural life.

During those years the works he had done had certainly contributed to the significant development of Azerbaijan. While he was in charge of many very important sectors in 1982-1987, he had major plans related to the further development of Azerbaijan. Heydar Aliyev always paid great attention to Azerbaijan and provided his help.

In 1987, after removal of Heydar Aliyev from all positions without any grounds, Azerbaijan lost a huge pillar. From that time on, a great injustice was shown against

representation of Azerbaijan in Moscow. Heydar Aliyev condemned the Soviet leadership in this heinous act, and expressed solidarity with the Azerbaijani people. With this he demonstrated once again that the problems, interests and grief of the Azerbaijani people were above everything for him, more than anything else for him, and he had to be with his people in hard days.

After that, Heydar Aliyev left the ranks of the Communist Party which he had served for many years. And then he went to his homeland and arrived in Nakhchivan, where he was born. The Azerbaijani people began to rally around him. The people of Nakhchivan united around Heydar Aliyev, elected him chairman of the Supreme Majlis (Parliament), and he defended Nakhchivan from Armenian occupation.

Thanks to him, tremendous mobilization work was carried out, self-defense detachments were set up and the occupation of Nakhchivan was prevented. It was on the initiative of

Heydar Aliyev that the tricolor flag of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, after a long break since 1920, was approved at a session of the Supreme Majlis of Nakhchivan as the official state flag. This was the beginning of a path leading to independence of Azerbaijan. The situation in Azerbaijan was gradually exacerbating. As a result of a crisis in the government, the country was on the verge of civil war and faced the peril of losing independence, the people of Azerbaijan demanded to bring Heydar Aliyev to the power, and the then leaders of Azerbaijan were forced to officially invite Heydar Aliyev to Baku.

On June 15, 1993, Heydar Aliyev was elected chairman of the Supreme Council (Parliament) of Azerbaijan, and on June 24, by a resolution of the Parliament, he proceeded to fulfill the authorities of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan. On October 3, 1993, as a result of the nationwide vote, Heydar Aliyev was elected President of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

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Chinese Tech transfer creates job opportunities

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Electronic Technology-transfer creating numerous job opportunities in Pakistan, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday. The report says, the outdoor temperature in Karachi has reached 40 degrees celsius in May. While in sweltering heat, staff at the workshop of an electronic factory in Karachi is working passionately. The staff is bracing to reach the goal of producing the country's first batch of microwave ovens with rotisserie function. In addition to microwave ovens, the company also expanded its capacity to produce Chinese companies' water dispenser earlier this year. Its partnership with a di-

versified home appliance leader in China is another milestone in the company's development and a key source for the company to bring top and best quality electronic products, technical expertise and industrial progress to Pakistan.

In an interview with Gwadar Pro, Muhammad Imran Ghani, CEO of this Pakistani company highlighted that many Chinese companies related to the electronics industry are transferring technology and increasing investment to create jobs in Pakistan. As a consequence, the increase in the number of employees has occurred not only in manufacturing, but also in sales, marketing and administration. "We have more than 100 employees working in the AC assembly line, and

more than 150 working in the LED TV factory. With the introduction of new microwave oven and water dispensers, the number of employees has increased significantly."

The CEO told Gwadar Pro that despite restrictions imposed by the pandemic, Chinese partners have been training local workers through online video. Its own brand has two production lines, including split or floor AC, LED and lights, etc, which also draw lessons from the production and sales model of Chinese brands.

Imran Ghani has been doing its business with China for 21 years. As for why to choose Chinese brands for cooperation, Imran Ghani explained that Chinese companies like Midea and Hisense devote 3% to 5% of their revenue to

research and development, which has led to enhanced and improved product development over the years. The affordability of Chinese products has attracted Pakistani consumers as well.

Currently, Pakistan's electronics industry is growing, with an output value of around USD 1.1 billion. The country sells around 0.7 million microwave ovens a year, and it has a market of 1.1 million units of split ACs and around 1.4 million units of LED TV. Imran Ghani shared that they already occupied 5 per cent of Pakistan's LED TV market and is confident of conquering 25 per cent in the next three to five years. He is quite hopeful about a deepening cooperation between China and Pakistan in the realm of electronic appliances and R&D.

Sitara-i-Pakistan conferred upon Prof. Matsumura

FOREIGN DESK



TOKYO: Pakistan Charge d' Affaires Ismat Hassan Sial, on behalf of the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has conferred "Sitara-i-Pakistan" upon Professor Takamitsu Matsumura for his outstanding services to the Urdu language in Japan. An award conferment ceremony was held at Embassy of Pakistan in Tokyo which was attended by the government officials, academia, think-tanks, businessmen and members of the Pakistani Community. Matsumura was awarded for his efforts to promote Urdu language in Japan for more than three decades. In his remarks, Matsumura expressed his deep gratitude to the President of Pakistan for awarding him with the award. The Charge d' Affaires, on the occasion, highlighted the important contributions made in promotion of Urdu language in Japan by Prof. Matsumura.

Germany: politically motivated crimes increased

BERLIN: It means that politically motivated crime is at its highest level since the statistics began to be reported in 2001, they added. The 23% increase in 2021 compared to the year before was largely due to offences were not in the "classic areas" of politically right-wing or politically left-wing motivated crime, the ministry said, which accounted for around 40% of the total offences. A significant number of these crimes were in connection with the COVID pandemic and the 2021 Bundestag elections. For instance, a petrol station worker was murdered for asking a customer to wear a mask in September. Right-wing extremists were behind many politically motivated violent attacks, German interior minister Nancy Faeser said. - APP

Hungary's 1st female president takes office

BUDAPEST: Katalin Novak, the first female president of Hungary, took office here on Tuesday. Her predecessor, former head of state Janos Ader, greeted the new president at the entrance to the Sandor Palace, the residence of the Hungarian president. Ader and Novak marched together on the red carpet up to the entrance of the residence, where they entered together. The Parliament elected Novak as President of Hungary on March 10. Following her election, Novak said she wanted to be a "President of peace." The official inauguration ceremony will take place on Saturday morning at Kossuth Square in front of the Parliament. Novak has been elected for a mandate of five years, and can be re-elected once according to the Fundamental Law. Ader held the office for two terms. - DNA



China slams US for changing Taiwan wording

BEIJING: A Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson on Tuesday slammed the United States for changing wording related to Taiwan on its State Department website, saying the move will hollow out the one-China principle and will backfire. Spokesperson Zhao Lijian made the remarks when asked to comment on a recent update to the Taiwan fact sheet displayed on the website of the U.S. Department of State, which removes wording both on not supporting Taiwan independence and on acknowledging China's position that Taiwan is part of China. "There is but one China in the world, and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory, with the Government of the People's Republic of China as the sole legal government of China," Zhao said, noting that these facts are the consensus of the international community and are universally recognized norms governing international relations.

"The U.S. has made solemn commitments on the Taiwan question and the one-China principle in the three China-U.S. joint communiques," Zhao noted, saying that changing the wording on Taiwan is an act of political manipulation and an attempt to change the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, which will backfire and the U.S. itself will get burnt. Zhao urged the United States to abide by the one-China principle and the stipulations of the three China-U.S. joint communiques, as well as the political commitments it made to China on the Taiwan question. "The U.S. side should put into practice President Biden's statement that the U.S. does not support Taiwan independence," and cease all political manipulation on Taiwan-related issues or any attempt to contain China with the Taiwan question," Zhao said. - Agencies

Marcos wins election victory in the Philippines



MANILA: Ferdinand Marcos Jr, whose dictator father and namesake plundered and brutalised the Philippines for decades, on Tuesday won a historic election victory, capping his clan's journey from pariahs to the presidential palace.

Marcos Jr, known by his nickname "Bongbong", won in a landslide, following relentless whitewashing of the family's past and leveraging of powerful alliances with rival families that control swathes of the poverty-plagued country.

In the 36 years since a popular uprising toppled the patriarch and chased the family into US exile, the Marcoses have been rebuilding their political fortunes. Despite his own father's concerns about his "carefree and lazy" nature, Marcos Jr, 64, made it the furthest. After narrowly losing the vice presidential race to Leni Robredo in the 2016 election, he was determined their rematch in the presidential contest would end differently. Vowing to unify the country, Marcos Jr made sweeping promises on the campaign trail to boost jobs and tackle rising prices as part of a pathway out of the pandemic. "Unity is my cause because of my firm belief that unity is the first step towards getting out of this crisis we are now in," Marcos Jr said in February - without ever explaining further what the slogan meant.

Growing up in the presidential palace in Manila, Marcos Jr wanted to be an astronaut before he followed in his father's footsteps into politics. He served as vice governor and twice as governor of the family's northern stronghold of Ilocos Norte province, and also had stints in the House of Representatives and the Senate.

His 92-year-old mother, Imelda, said she had dreamed of him becoming the country's leader. While he consulted her about running for president, Marcos Jr told CNN Philippines the decision was his. Marcos Jr's links to his father, especially the bloody repression of the martial law years, have made him one of the nation's most polarising politicians. - Agencies

Kuwaiti emir accepts government's resignation

ISTANBUL: Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah on Tuesday accepted the resignation of the country's government. The emir issued a decree asking the government to stay in a caretaker capacity, the state news agency KUNA reported.

Last month, Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Hamad Al-Sabah submitted his government's resignation, the fourth in the past two years and a half.

No reason was provided for the government's resignation, which came days after a parliamentary session to question the premier over accusations of unconstitutional acts, hindering people's interests and non-cooperation with the legislative authority. Since 1985, 11 Kuwaiti governments resigned and 16 ministers relieved of their duties following 128 parliamentary questioning sessions. - Agencies

Solider killed, 4 hurt in Somalia blast

MOGADISHU: A Somali soldier was killed and four wounded in a bomb blast in southern Somalia on Tuesday. A remote-controlled explosive device was planted along a road frequently used by the Somali military in Burane, a village on the outskirts of Jowhar, capital of the Middle Shabelle region, a police officer told Anadolu Agency. "The bomb went off when the soldiers were passing through on a motorcycle and a motorized rickshaw," said the cop, who asked not to be named due to security concerns in the conflict-ridden region. "One of them died on the spot and the others are in hospital," he said, adding that Somali forces have launched a search operation in the area. - Agencies

Pakistan's cotton export to China improving

Dr. Tassawar Hussain Malik, Director at Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC), Ministry of National Food Security and Research told China Economic Net that price is the main reason for cotton yarn export, and both farmers and exporters get a good price advantage from China

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistani cotton experts expressed confidence in the development of local cotton-related industry and yarn export to China as well as other parts of the world, which is increasing every year despite the COVID-19 pandemic, says a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Tuesday. According to the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC), data showed that China imported more than \$168 million worth of cotton yarn from Pakistan in the first three months of this year. Uncombed single cotton yarn (commodity code 52051200),

containing 85% or above, crossed \$133 million in the first quarter of 2022. Data further showed that the export of cotton yarn (commodity code 52051100) from Pakistan to China crossed \$33.30 million, while last year in the same period it was \$34.06 million. The export of uncombed cabled cotton yarn (commodity code 52053200) to China crossed \$1.50 million in the first quarter of 2022. In the first quarter of 2022, more than 51147.28 tons of cotton yarn were imported from Pakistan. As affected by COVID-19, last year the import of cotton yarn was more in terms of quantity and value. Dr. Tassawar Hussain Malik, Director at Pakistan Central Cotton Committee (PCCC), Ministry of

National Food Security and Research told China Economic Net that price is the main reason for cotton yarn export, and both farmers and exporters get a good price advantage from China. He added that Pakistan has top quality cotton because manual picking ensures its quality. "Last year the approved minimum price was Rs 5500 per 40KG and this year cotton associations suggested Rs 8000 to keep domestic availability because Pakistan's textile sector is booming and local demands increased," he stated. He further said that the germination resources of both countries are complementary. Chinese technology and new varieties of seeds could help improve Paki-

stan's cotton industry. Experts believe that cotton plant protection is still a big crisis in cotton production and authorities need to take it seriously while about 20% of the cotton crop/production is lost on a yearly basis. They said that in the last 5 years, the followings are the reasons for damaged cotton crops; PBW: 10-15%, Whitefly: 10-12%, Other insects: 5-6%, Cotton leaf curl disease (CLCuD) Disease: 10-15%, Insects Disease complex: 40-45%. Experts told CEN that last year's pink bollworm attack was severe and at least 200KG per acre were lost simply because of PBW which was tantamount to around 15 lac bales. They added that streamlining seed trait technologies for in-

sect resistance and strengthening national and provincial plant protection systems are required while back-to-back heavy rainfall spells in 2019 and 2020 created drainage problems in Sindh where around 1 million bales are damaged each year. They further said Pakistan and China should work together, especially regarding plant protection issues in Pakistan like insect pests and diseases. This year, climate change and extreme heatwaves are affecting the cotton crop, so they should take advantage of China's cotton and Pakistan's cotton to create new varieties. They added that yarn growing could be fruitful if Chinese technologies and seeds are used in Pakistan.

Briefs

Pak sends 2nd tranche of relief for Afghanistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) as per the directions of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday dispatched second consignment of relief items for the flood affected of Afghanistan through PAF C-130 aircraft for Mazari-Sharif. Earlier, Pakistan on Saturday dispatched one C-130 aircraft to Mazari-Sharif, capital of Afghanistan's northern Balkh Province, carrying emergency relief items for the people hit by flash floods, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry said. "Pakistan as a neighboring country has been at the forefront of efforts for provision of humanitarian assistance for the Afghan people," the foreign ministry said in a statement. Pakistan hopes that the international community would also play its active part in providing timely relief and economic assistance to the affected people in Afghanistan, it added. A second plane-load of food and shelter items would be sent in a few days as a gesture of goodwill for the flood victims in Afghanistan, according to the statement. At least nine people were killed, 10 others were injured and three went missing in recent floods triggered by heavy rains in Afghanistan, the Afghan authorities said Friday.

Handful of Afghan women protest Taliban decree

DNA

KABUL: About a dozen women protested in the Afghan capital on Tuesday against the Taliban's new edict that females must fully cover their faces and bodies when in public. Afghanistan's supreme leader and Taliban chief Hibatullah Akhundzada issued a mandate over the weekend ordering women to cover up fully, ideally with the traditional all-covering burqa. The diktat was the latest in a series of creeping restrictions in Afghanistan, where the Taliban have rolled back the marginal gains made by women after a US-led invasion toppled the first Taliban regime in 2001. "Justice, justice!" chanted the protesters, many with uncovered faces, in central Kabul. The demonstrators also chanted "Burqa is not our hijab!" - indicating their objection to trading the less restrictive hijab headscarf for the totally concealing burqa. After a short procession, the march was halted by Taliban fighters, who also obstructed journalists from reporting on the event. Akhundzada's decree, which also orders women to "stay at home" if they have no important work outside, has triggered international condemnation. "We want to live as human beings, not as some animal held captive in a corner of a house," protester Saira Sama Alimyar said at the rally.

US says it will increase pressure on Taliban

WASHINGTON: The United States will take steps to increase pressure on Afghanistan's Taliban government to reverse some of its recent decisions restricting the rights of women and girls if the group shows no sign of rescinding the actions on its own. "We've addressed it directly with the Taliban," State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a briefing on Monday. "We have a number of tools that, if we feel these won't be reversed, these won't be undone, that we are prepared to move forward with." He did not elaborate on the possible steps or indicate how the group, which has already implemented policies curbing 20 years of gains for girls' and women's rights, might have a change of heart. The Taliban on Saturday ordered women to cover their faces in public, a return to a signature policy of their past headline rule and an escalation of restrictions that are causing anger at home and abroad. - APP

CM directs early completion of development schemes

"This should be considered as final deadline to this effect" he remarked and added that in case of the non-compliance with the directive, concerned factory would be sealed

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has made it clear to the administrative secretaries of all provincial departments that no delay even of a single day would be acceptable in the completion of the ongoing development projects and directed them to ensure cent percent utilization of the developmental funds, and to complete the development projects within the stipulated timelines adding that in case of lapse of the released funds for any project by the end of the fiscal year, the concerned secretary would be taken to task. He further directed them to pay special attention to the preparation of development program for the next fiscal year and to ensure their attendance in the meetings of Planning & Development Department to be held in this regard. "Ongoing Development Projects would be completed on the first priority during the next fiscal year" he said and added that new projects having larger impact would also be reflected in the new Annual Development Program. He was chairing a meeting held here on Tuesday to review the progress so far made

on the development projects in the province. Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjid Ali Khan, Administrative Secretaries of provincial departments and other relevant officials attended the meeting. Expressing his dissatisfaction over the pace of work on certain development projects, the chief minister directed the quarters concerned to ensure significant progress on the projects making it clear that the progress on the projects would be reviewed after the next 15 days in which secretaries of the departments would have to present solid and detailed progress on the projects of their respective departments. He further stated that a special meeting would also be held by the end of this month to review the utilization of released funds for development projects adding that in case of non-utilization/low-utilization of the funds, action would be taken against the responsible ones. He also directed the concerned Deputy Commissioners to immediately start the payment to land owners for the acquisition of land so that work on development projects could be commenced without any delay. He also directed the quarters concerned to identify suitable sites with-

in a week for the establishment of Citizen Facilitation Centers at all divisional headquarters of the province. Similarly, he directed the departments concerned to jointly prepare way forward for the shifting of marble factories from Warsak Road to newly established Mohmand Economic Zone within the next 15 days. "This should be considered as final deadline to this effect" he remarked and added that in case of the non-compliance with the directive, concerned factory would be sealed. He also directed to complete necessary arrangements for the groundbreaking of Patrak-Thal-Kumrat Road and Swat Motorway Phase-II project further directing them to impose Section-IV on the proposed land for Dir Motorway adding that required funds would be provided for the purpose on priority. Briefing about the progress on important projects in health sector, it was told that in newly merged districts, so far, six health care facilities had been outsourced which were also providing specialized services. Moreover, outsourcing of 11 more health care facilities in NMDs would be completed by next week. The meeting was informed that progress was being made on strengthening and conversion

of Basic Health Units and Rural Health Centers into 24/7 health care facilities. Similarly, 35 percent physical progress on revamping of non-teaching DHQs across the province was made, under the project, revamping of six hospitals in first phase and 12 hospitals in second phase would be carried out. The participants were informed that, civil work on construction of New General Bus stand Peshawar had been initiated while consultant was hired for New Peshawar city project. Besides, contracts had been signed with three universities for the establishment of IT Parks in the province. The meeting was told that, solarization of some 5000 Masajid would be completed by the end of 2023 while upgradation of Hayatabad sports complex would be completed by June this year. The chief minister on the occasion, directed the quarters concerned to mobilize contractor for the construction of Kalam cricket stadium and expedite progress on Arbab Niaz cricket stadium. Touching upon the higher education sector, it was told that a total of 35 colleges would be made functional in the province by the end of current financial year whereas an umbrella PC-I had been approved for establishment of 20 new colleges.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov and the Staff of the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan lays flowers in front of the bust of Heydar Aliyev, National Leader of Azerbaijan at the Embassy and commemorated him on his 99th birth anniversary. - DNA

Spanish PM's phone 'targeted with spyware'

MADRID: The Spanish government has said the mobile phones of the prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, and the defence minister, Margarita Robles, were both infected last year with the Pegasus spyware that its manufacturers claim is available only to state agencies. In a hastily convened press conference on Monday morning, Félix Bolanos, the minister for the presidency, said Sánchez's phone was targeted in May and June 2021, while Robles's was targeted in June 2021. Data was extracted from both phones. Bolanos said the "illicit" and "external" targeting would be investigated by Spain's highest criminal court, the Audiencia Nacional, adding the targeting must have come from abroad as any such monitoring in Spain would have had required judicial authorisation. "These facts have been confirmed and are irrefutable," said Bolanos. "I don't think now is the time to engage in supposition or conjecture about what the motivation may have been." The phones of other members of the government are being examined to determine

whether they may also have been targeted. The allegations come as the Spanish government faces questions over how Pegasus - which is sold by the Israeli company NSO Group - allegedly came to be used to monitor dozens of members of the Catalan independence movement, including the president of the north-eastern Spanish region, Pere Aragonès, and three of his predecessors. Last month, Aragonès told the Guardian the alleged targeting, revealed by Citizen Lab cybersecurity experts, constituted a violation of individual rights, an attack on democracy, and a threat to political dissent. The Catalan regional government has pointed the finger at Spain's National Intelligence Centre (CNI), which insists its operations are overseen by the supreme court and that it acts "in full accordance with the legal system, and with absolute respect for the applicable laws". The Spanish government has promised an internal CNI investigation into the alleged targeting of Catalan activists, while Spain's public ombudsman has also opened an independent investigation. - Agencies

Seize illegal funding if found: PTI lawyer Anwar tells ECP

ISLAMABAD: PTI lawyer Anwar Mansoor said Tuesday if the party has accumulated funding through illegal means then it should be seized, but rejected the notion of the party being dissolved. Mansoor made the statement during the PTI's foreign funding case at the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), which was being heard by a three-member bench headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja. Mansoor, presenting his arguments in response to the ECP's scrutiny committee report, asked whether the funds sent by an overseas Pakistani could be termed "foreign funding". "If we need a decision on whether foreign funding is not in the interest of the country, then the Supreme Court will rule on it [...] your job is not to look at foreign funding

but to analyse whether the funds were illegal. You cannot go further than that," the lawyer told the ECP bench. At this, the chief election commissioner agreed that the ECP's job was to identify illegal funding and told the PTI lawyer that the body had upgraded its finance wing. The lawyer contended that a "false narrative" was being created that the PTI was running on foreign funds. "Several political parties have not shown their funding but they are openly holding rallies," he said, without specifying any party. Mansoor further said that if a Pakistani residing abroad sends funds to the PTI, it would not fall under the category of foreign funding and also informed the bench that an LLC was funding for the PTI but it was not illegal as the party was not paying it for the task. - DNA

IT Ministry thwarts cyberattack on NTC system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Information Technology (IT) has successfully thwarted an attempted cyberattack on its National Telecom Corporation (NTC) system. NTC is an official Telecom/ICT service provider to the Government of Pakistan. According to the IT ministry, the attack was launched on the networking website at 11:30am today which was prevented because of a "safe cyber security system" in place. The ministry said that there are websites of various departments on the NTC servers. However, some of the websites were automatically suspended which were reactivated within three hours. A meeting has been convened for tomorrow under the chairmanship of the secretary of IT to discuss the matter.

Upcoming budget aims to fiscal consolidation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail on Tuesday said that upcoming budget aims at bringing in the fiscal consolidation and improving the overall resilience of the economy. For this reason, government was planning to provide various relief measures for protecting the vulnerable segments of the society, said a press release issued by Ministry of Finance. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail, held a meeting with Mr. Hartwig Schafer, Vice President South Asia Region (SAR), World Bank. Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Dr. Aisha Ghous Pasha, Country Director WB Mr. Najib Benhassine, Acting Governor SBP Dr. Murtaza Syed, Secretary Finance, Secretary Power Division, Secretary EAD, Chairman FBR and other senior officers attended the meeting. The Finance Minister welcomed Mr. Hartwig Schafer and shared that country is currently facing monetary and fiscal challenges due to rising global commodity prices. The Finance Minister further stated that present government would introduce reforms in priority areas to address fiscal deficits. In this context, two programs of World Bank named Resilient Institution for Sustainable Economy (RISE) and Program for Affordable and Clean Energy (PACE-II) hold a central position in the reform agenda of government. - APP

British High Commissioner calls on Rana Sana Ullah

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan Dr. Christian Turner called on Minister for Interior Rana Sana Ullah here on Tuesday and issues of mutual interests including Pak-UK bilateral relations came under discussion. The British High Commissioner congratulated Rana Sana Ullah on assuming office of the interior minister, said a statement issued here. Rana Sana Ullah praised the role of the British Government in promoting health, education and human development in Pakistan. Apart from bilateral relations, the emerging geographical, political and regional situation was also discussed during the meeting, it further said. The two sides also agreed to strengthen ties between the Interior Ministry and the British Home Office to promote bilateral relations. Rana Sana Ullah valued its bilateral relations with the United Kingdom. Pakistanis living in the UK have a very important role in the country's development, he added. He said there was a lot of potential for tourism, trade and business opportunities between Pakistan and the UK. It has been 75 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and the United Kingdom, he said. The British High Commissioner stressed the need to devise a joint strategy to tackle extremism and terrorism.

Norway, Pakistan enjoy excellent relations: Envoy

"One of the main priorities for My team and I at the Embassy will be to see how we can contribute to further deepening and strengthening trade relations and economic cooperation between our two countries"

DNA

KARACHI: Ambassador of Norway Per Albert Ilsaas has said that although Norway and Pakistan have been enjoying excellent relations as both countries have been cooperating with each other in multiple spheres and it was positive that the trade volume was increasing but the numbers were not very impressive due to many reasons. "One of the main priorities for My team and I at the Embassy will be to see how we can contribute to further deepening and strengthening trade relations and economic cooperation between our two countries", Norwegian Envoy added while exchanging views at a meeting during his visit to Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI). President KCCI Muhammad Idrees, Senior Vice President Abdul Rehman Naqi, Vice President Qazi Zahid Hussain, Chairman Diplomatic Missions & Embassies Liaison Subcommittee Ziaul Arfeen, Former President KCCI Majid Aziz, Second Secretary - Political, Norwegian Embassy Ms. Silje Marie, Program Advisor Development Norwegian Embassy M. Bilal Majeed and KCCI

Managing Committee Members were also present at the meeting. Norwegian Ambassador, who was on his maiden visit to Karachi, said that the purpose of his visit to Karachi Chamber was to discuss the possibilities of enhancing trade between the two countries and seek advice on how the Norwegian Embassy and KCCI can work together for further strengthening bilateral relations. "Norway is fortunate

enough to be home to a large and well-integrated Pakistani diaspora of 39,700 which was a sizeable number for Norway as its overall population was 5.3 million only and the Pakistani diaspora has been contributing well to Norwegian society and the economy", he added. He informed that Norway was a very rich country with huge natural resources particularly oil and gas resources while fish and salmon have been one of Nor-

way's main articles of export. "President KCCI rightly pointed out immense opportunities in blue economy and Norway is a seafaring nation because the country has a large coastline. I think these are the areas where there may be opportunities that are of mutual interest and benefits which can be identified and explored but Pakistan is not always perceived by Norwegians as the easiest place to do business", he added.

