



# Islamabad POST

Friday, May 06, 2022

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Belarus is doing 'everything' to end war in Ukraine**

Detailed News On Page-08

**Antony Blinken tests positive for Covid-19**

Detailed News On Page-07



**Nadal wins on return from injury**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

**No rifts within our family**

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League (PML) President and former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujat Hussain while addressing an Eid Milan party in Gujrat has said that these days rumors are being spread about differences in our family, I pray to Allah for such people to grant them direction. Those people who are trying to create difference in our family, Insha-Allah they will fail, they will not get anything, will be those talking about differences in our family will be defeated miserably and those who are trying to tempt us they will suffer.

**Govt trying to maintain PoL prices**

KARACHI: Finance Minister Miftah Ismail said on Thursday that the government would try its best to maintain petrol prices and assured that even if the rates were increased, no new tax or levy would be imposed. Ismail, in his presser, said the government had previously never sold petrol at a loss because the economy could not afford it, adding that if fuel prices are not hiked in May, the treasury will lose Rs102 billion. Ismail blamed the previous Imran Khan-led government for implementing policies that contradicted what was agreed by them during meetings with the IMF in Washington. - APP

**Shazia stresses reforms**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation, Shazia Merri on Thursday stressed the need for reforms to conduct free and fair elections in the country. There is dire need to work on election reforms to bring improvement in the system, she said while talking to news channels. Commenting on Imran's political agenda against the ruling party of Pakistan Muslim League-N, she said, Imran Khan is not able to gather one hundred thousand people for his campaign.

## PTI govt ouster

# Govt to form commission to probe plot

Info Minister says cabinet will approve the terms of reference (TOR) of the inquiry commission in the next cabinet meeting

SHUJAAT HAMZA /DNA

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb announced on Thursday that the government will form a commission to probe the alleged foreign conspiracy that led to PTI Chairman Imran Khan's ouster. Talking about the commission, the federal minister said that the commission will be unbiased and will conduct an investigation independently. "The head of the commission will be someone on whom no one will be able to point fingers at," she added. Aurangzeb said that the cabinet will approve the terms of reference (TOR) of the inquiry commission in the next cabinet meeting. She further said that everything will be cleared once the report comes which will also be shown to the nation. Calling the alleged foreign conspiracy a lie, Aurangzeb said this is to save former PM's wife Bushra Bibi's close aide Farhat Shehzadi aka Farah Khan. "This



**Imran to hold public gathering in Mianwali today**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Continuing his pressure on the incumbent government, PTI Chairman Imran Khan has announced that he will hold a public gathering in Mianwali on Friday (May 6) to kick off his campaign for "real freedom". In a video message posted



Continued on Page 06

is Gogi bachao tehrak," she added. In her reaction to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Chaudhry Fawad Hussain's statement, she

Continued on Page 06

# PTI rejects govt made commission

Fawad says will only consider commission formed under independent judiciary

ISLAMABAD: Shedding light on the investigation of the alleged "foreign conspiracy", former information minister and senior PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry said that the then PTI cabinet had set terms of reference (TORs), demanding the Chief Justice of Pakistan to probe it. He said that the PTI has already rejected any sort of commission formed by the government. "We will only consider

Continued on Page 06

## Gill injured in car accident

LAHORE: PTI leader Shahbaz Gill on Thursday sustained minor injuries in an accident on the motorway, media reported. The former special assistant to then prime minister Imran Khan was travelling to Islamabad from Lahore. According to motorway police officials, the accident took place near Khanqah Dogran. A spokesperson of the motorway police said that there was no evidence of involvement of any other vehicle. The injured will be shifted to Islamabad

Continued on Page 06



RAWALPINDI: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) & Begum COAS visited families of Captain Muhammad Kashif Shaheed & Captain Muhammad Saad Bin Amin Shaheed. - DNA

**PM orders emergency relief goods for Afghans**  
Shehbaz Sharif expressed sorrow over the loss of precious lives due to floods

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Thursday expressed solidarity with the people of Afghanistan facing loss of lives due to severe floods and said Pakistan was sending emergency relief goods for the victims. "We are with the Afghan people in this difficult hour and will provide them every possible assistance," the prime minister said in a statement issued by the PM Office. PM Shehbaz Sharif expressed sorrow over the loss of precious lives due to floods in 10 provinces of Afghanistan. He called upon the international community to come forward and provide emergency assistance to the Afghan people in the wake of devastating floods. He urged the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to intensify its efforts in assisting the affected Afghan people through the Afghan Humanitarian

Continued on Page 06

# US condemns KU attack targeting Chinese nationals

Ned Price says the US gives great importance to its relations with Pakistan

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States condemned the terrorist attack at the University of Karachi that killed four people, including three Chinese nationals. At least four people were killed while four others sustained injuries in a suicide explosion at the premises of the University of Karachi on April 26 outside Confucius Institute. Addressing a press briefing Wednesday, US State Department Spokesperson Ned Price deplored the terrorist attack in Karachi terming it "a true affront to man-

kind." "A terrorist attack anywhere is an affront to humanity everywhere, but for a terrorist attack to take place at a university, or at a religious site, or at some of the locations we've seen recently - that is a true affront to mankind," he stated when

Continued on Page 06

## Ukraine War

# France, India call for cessation of hostilities

PARIS: India and France have called for "an immediate cessation of hostilities" in Ukraine, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi again stopping short of condemning Russia's invasion of its neighbour. India, which



Continued on Page 06

# March in May: its prospects and govt reaction

PTI leadership has to admit the reality that it is simply not possible to survive in the isolation, particularly when Pakistan's economic and defense related needs are directly linked to brotherly and friendly countries

COMMENT

ANSAR M BHATTI



ISLAMABAD: The former Prime Minister and head of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Imran Khan has announced to spearhead a long march towards Islamabad most probably in the last week of the month. The political parties, by and large, do not choose the month of May for long marches and rallies because of scorching heat that restricts public mobility. However, the PTI had to do it now for it cannot afford to delay its movement anymore. There is no doubt that PTI, after the unfolding of the so-called 'lettergate' issue, has sought to improve and strengthen its popularity, which at one point seemed to have touched the lowest ebb. It was just a month ago that

even the die-hard PTI workers had resolutely announced not to vote for Imran Khan keeping in view the three years and seven months performance of the PTI government. The youth; women voters and supporters especially seemed greatly disturbed with the PTI performance. Price hike; free ride of the dollar; lawlessness and so on and so forth were the key issues that had made all and sundry disappointed. In the light of the above, if the PTI government would complete its five year term, its defeat in the elections would have become certain. But then surfaced the Lettergate issue and things dramatically turned into PTI's favour. I held a consistent view from the outset that there was nothing substantive in the letter issue. It was a routine cable. And even if it sought a regime change in Pakistan, it was not something new. We have come across such communications and interventions even in the past that ultimately led to change of governments. Nevertheless, the way Imran Khan exploited the issue in his favour needs fulsome applause.

He literally made a mountain out of molehill. And resultantly, he once again turns out to be the most popular leader of Pakistan. Imran Khan has a clear understanding of the fact that memories of Pakistani people are short-lived therefore he wanted to cash in on the situation fully sooner rather than later. That is why he dared to announce a long march in May. His ultimate destination, from the face of it, appears to be the D Chow, where he had previously staged a sit-in for 126 days against the PML N government with Nawaz Sharif at the helm of affairs at that time. It also remains a fact that despite the 126 days of sit-in Imran Khan and his allies he could not dislodge the then government. Another important development

that presumably has forced PTI to have an early long march relates to a possible smear campaign being launched against the PTI chairman by making public some videos that may contain indecent materials. The purpose of the campaign, as claimed by the PTI leadership, is to disparage the respect and credibility of the party chairman in the eyes of his voters and supporters and even the general public. This reported campaign may be launched before the long march in order to make sure that people do not take part in this drill. Only time will tell to what extent the anti-Imran Khan forces are able to cause a potential dent to the credibility of the ex Prime Minister, one thing is for sure the PTI chairman has successfully

sold his narrative of foreign intervention or conspiracy that led to removal of his government. Interestingly, the PTI chairman has suddenly started praising the armed forces of Pakistan despite the fact that when the lettergate issue appeared on the scene, he indirectly held the Establishment also responsible for his ouster. Thus, he chose to take the Establishment to task in his speeches and media interviews but not anymore. Analysts believe Imran's this approach may help him not only have improved relations with the Establishment but contribute towards the success of his intended long march as well. The PTI leadership is quite hopeful about the success of its venture and announcement of the date for the next elections as a result of it. According to its plans, elections in September or October would greatly help the PTI to return to power with an even bigger majority. The government on the other hand has its own plans. It wants to complete the remaining term come what may. There is a consensus that the government can counter long march plans only through its good governance and resolu-

tion of problems faced by the common people. It needs not to repeat the mistakes of the PTI government. It needs to immediately bottle the inflation monster if it really wants to make its rule sustainable. While the dollar still remains out of control, the abnormally long power outages across the country have started taking a heavy toll on especially those living in the remote areas. A temporary respite in power cuts was witnessed on the Eid days but people expect this govt to do away with load-shedding once and for all. Summing up, the PTI leadership has to work on all fronts including improvement of its relations with the international community, in order for its long march to meet with success. Imran Khan also has to keep in mind that if his theory of foreign intervention is true, then forces responsible for his removal would never like him to return to power any time soon. The PTI leadership has to admit the reality that it is simply not possible to survive in isolation. And particularly when Pakistan's economic and defense related needs are directly linked to brotherly and friendly countries.



## Inside...

Namak Mandi's lavish cuisines attract foodies - Page 02

No one allowed to misuse blasphemy law - Page 03

Nation stands shoulder to shoulder with Army: UBG - Page 04

"Thailand and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation: A Gateway to the Muslim World" - Page 05

Sell seized Russian assets to rebuild Ukraine: EU chief - Page 06

Romania Black Sea port Ukrainian export hub - Page 07

Russian ceasefire begins at besieged steel plant - Page 08



# Namak Mandi's lavish cuisines attract foodies

DNA

PESHAWAR: Known as city of hospitality, Peshawar's famous food street Namak Mandi has attracted food lovers in droves where they enjoyed the mouthwatering BBQ, Mattan Karahi, Chappli Kabab, Peshawar rice Polao, Paye and others traditional cuisines with an aromatic Peshawari Qehwa during Eid days. Namak Mandi, a street famous for Mattan Karahi, Chappli Kabab, BBQ, Paye and Peshawari rice Polao located in backside of the historic Qissa Khwani bazaar are flooded with tourists, visitors and food lovers on third day of Eid following improvement of weather condition after heavy rains and significant reduction in coronavirus cases. Sitting in hammock charpays in primitive food shops at Namak Mandi, the

tourists and food lovers enjoyed the mouth-watering Chappli Kabab, BBQ, Peshawar rice Polao and Mattan Karahi along with aromatic green tea that doubled their happiness during Eid. "Chappli Kabab and Mattan Karahi is my favorite dish and my Eid seems incomplete without tasting its delectable bites," said Khayam Khan, a resident of Pabbi, Nowshera while talking to APP at Namak Mandi along with family and friends. "After two years, I came to Namak Mandi to enjoy Chappli Kabab and Mattan Karahi along with aromatic green tea of the Qissa Khwani bazaar. In previous two Eids, I could not come my favorite food place due to coronavirus," he said. "I have also purchased two KG Chappli Kabab and three parcels of Peshawari rice Polao for Eid party of my family," he said. Like Khayam, a large number of food lovers visited Namak Mandi and others

food streets of Peshawar where they enjoyed traditional cuisines including mouth watering Chappli Kabab due to its excellent taste and deliciousness. Arif Ahmad, a famous Chappli Kabab businessman told APP on Thursday that demands of Chappli Kabab have increased manifolds during Eid. Besides enjoying appetizing traditional cuisines at hotels and open restaurants at night, he said most of Chappli Kabab lovers asked for parcels from two Kg to five Kg for Eid parties at home to avoid hot weather at day time. Inherited Chappli Kabab's business from my father, he said, "my father Jalil Ahmad had took over it from his father, Jumma Khan in 1950. Following the death of my father, all his (Jalil Ahmad) six sons had carried forward the legacy of this hard-earned business and continued till date with a lot of hope to transfer it to the next generation," he said.



LALAMUSA: Editor Daily Islamabad POST and DNA News Agency Ansar M Bhatti with PM Adviser on Kashmir Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira at the Kaira House. -DNA

## Eid celebrated in Faisalabad

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Eid ul Fitar was celebrated in Faisalabad District with enthusiasm. The District administration had made comprehensive administrative and security arrangements in order to observance of Eid ul Fitar with smooth and peaceful manner after the Eid prayer, Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad visited Old Age Home and met with senior citizen. He presented Eid greeting and presented gifts to them. ACs Umar Maqbool, Sahbaz Muhammad Yousaf, Incharge Rabia Khalid and others were also present on the occasion. Deputy Commissioner asked about the health of elderly people and directed the administration of old age home to take special care to the older persons so they don't get bored at all. He said that older persons were our objective and we should not left them alone. He asked them about the facilities being provided to them and got satisfied on them. He appealed the young generations to give due respect to their parents and give them their rights so they could not come at these centers. Deputy Commissioner also went to Darulaman and gave Eid gifts to the inmate women. He also checked the available facilities at centers for women and expand them according to the requirements. Earlier, Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad visited different wards of Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology and presented Eid gifts to patients which were arranged by Heart Saver Foundation. General

Secretary HSF Kashif Farooq was also with him. Medical Social Officer Aasia Faqir Hussain, Manager Asma Muzzamal and members of HSF were also present. Deputy Commissioner expressed best wishes for patients and prayed for their early recovery. He asked the administration of hospital to provide best treatment facilities to the patients. He appreciated the duty of doctors on the eve of Eid. He also went to other wards of hospitals and extends Eid greetings to the patients and prayed for their sound health. Deputy Commissioner also went to SOS village Canal road and met with children and asked them to do focus on their education. He also checked the facilities available for children at SOS. Deputy Commissioner went to District Head Quarters Hospital and Children Hospital and presented Eid greetings to patients and prayed for their early health. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioners Sadar & City visited Child Protection Bureau and met with inmate children and distributed Eid gifts among them. District officer CPWB Ijaz Aslam Dogar, Social person Dr. Jaffar Hassan Mubarak, Child Protection Officers were also present. They also cut Eid cake with inmate children. Expressing their views, Assistant Commissioner said that the real philosophy of Eid celebration is to spend the time of joys with the inmates children and suffering humanity, we should keep remember the needy and deserving persons on Eid to mitigate their difficulties. They said that they feel spiritual satisfaction and happiness on spending time on Eid

with such children. A high level meeting was held at DC office during Eid holidays to discuss the security and administrative arrangement on Eid. Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad and CPO Ghulam Mubashir Maiken jointly preside the meeting. MPAs Mian Tahir Jameel and Rana Ali Abbas were also present while ADC HQ Kashif Raza Awan, members district peace committee Molana Riaz Ahmad Kharal, Syed Jaffar Naqvi, Dr. Iftikhar Naqvi, Dr. Mumtaz, Mian Tanvir Riaz, Aslam Bhali and other were participated. Deputy Commissioner and CPO thanked the parliamentarians and members peace committee for maintaining peace in district on Eid. They also highlighted the administrative and security arrangements made by district and police administration on Eid and informed that control rooms were also remained functional besides other security measures. They said District & Police Administration had made special arrangements at the Mosques, Imam Bargah, Eid Gah and open places of Eid contingents and police alongwith Civil Defense volunteers perform duty. They thanked the citizen for co-operating during Eid days. Parliamentarians and member DPC appreciated the security and administrative measures taken by district and police administration and said that for maintaining peace in district their cooperation would continue. Earlier, Commissioner Zahid Hussain, Deputy Commissioner Ali Shahzad and other officers prayed Eid prayer at Chenab Club Mosque. They presented Eid greetings to the people of Faisalabad.

## Punjab governor seeks Army Chief's help

DNA

LAHORE: A day after urging Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa to play his "role" in the implementation of the Constitutional framework in Punjab, Governor Omar Sarfaraz Cheema Thursday said that he will arrest CM Hamza Shehbaz Sharif if provided "a subedar and four soldiers". In a statement on Twitter, Omar Sarfaraz Cheema said that the crisis-hit province has been taken hostage by force. The PTI loyalist said that the silence of mainstream political parties on the constitutional crisis in Punjab is "extremely worrying" and added that Awab Alvi, President Arif Alvi's son, will be the next chief minister of Sindh if such practices become the culture of our politics. "I always called for a neutral umpire during my political struggle," he said, adding that the neutral umpire, in fact, has the same rules for both teams. Cheema has been at the centre of controversy in the country's biggest province since PTI appointed him as governor replacing Mohammad Sarwar at the peak of the crisis last month.

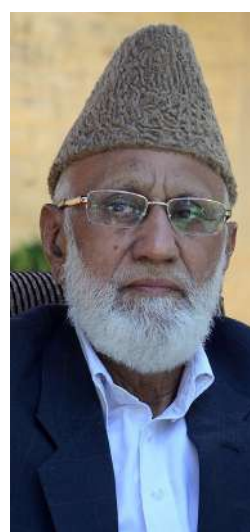


Refusing to administer the oath to Hamza Shehbaz, he also earned the ire of the Lahore High Court which later ordered National Assembly Speaker Raja Pervaiz Ashraf to do the job. A day earlier, Omar Sarfaraz Cheema had penned a letter to COAS Qamar Javed Bajwa urging him to play his due role in the implementation of the constitutional framework in the province. He had appealed to the army chief to play his role to restore people's confidence in provincial and federal governments. He also sent copies of his letter to the

prime minister and the president. Earlier, Omar Sarfaraz Cheema had written a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif about the political and constitutional crisis in the province. In the letter, the Punjab governor vowed to protect the country's Constitution by utilising all of his skills and abilities. "No power can bar me from stopping your son's unconstitutional actions," the governor had told the PM. Declaring Usman Buzdar's resignation as controversial, Cheema had accused the PML-N of securing the support of PTI's dissident lawmakers and added that the turncoats were even presented before the media. "Hamza Shehbaz has taken advantage of being the son of the prime minister." The governor had said that the Punjab Assembly secretary had apprised him about the violations of laws relating to the "fraud election" for the post of the chief minister. "You, as prime minister, dragged the country towards political crisis by using your powers unconstitutionally," Cheema had stated. "You, your son and Maryam Nawaz are nominated in criminal cases," the governor had said, adding that it is the country's "bad luck" that the PM and Punjab CM were on key posts despite being on bail.

## Rich tributes paid to Ashraf Sehrai

DNA



Senior APHC leader, Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai died in Indian police custody in Jammu last year on May 5, Kashmir Media Service reported.

The All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders, including General Secretary Molvi Bashir Ahmad, Zamrooda Habib, Abdul Ahad Parra, Ghulam Muhammad Khan Sopori, Bilal Ahmed Siddiqui, Jameel Ahmad, Dr. Musab, Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, IIOJK Bar member, Advocate G N Shaheen, Mehmood Ahmad Saghar, Altaf Hussain Wani, Nazir Ahmad Shawl and Qazi Imran in their separate statements said that the death of Ashraf Sehrai was an irreversible loss but his

sacrifices should not be allowed to be forgotten and his mission would be accomplished at all costs. The statements said the people who were responsible for his custodial death are yet to be brought to justice. The statements reiterated that the people of Kashmir would continue their freedom struggle till complete success. It said the Indian government was directly responsible for Sehrai's custodial murder. It added said that there was dire need to have a credible investigation into the incident to ascertain the real facts that led to the tragic death of the Kashmiri leader. Meanwhile, APHC leaders Jameel Ahmad and Dr. Musab led a function in Srinagar holding banners in memory of the martyred leader Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai and reiterated to continue the martyrs' mission despite all odds. In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, a strike was also observed on the first martyrdom anniversary of senior APHC leader and Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Chairman, Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai, today. Defying strict orders by Indian forces, the business community closed their shops in several areas of Srinagar and other major towns of the valley to mourn the custodial killing of Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai in Jammu's Udhampur jail on this day, last year. Prayers sessions were held in many parts of the Kashmir valley despite military siege.

## Two boys drown at Karachi's sea view beach on Eid

KARACHI: Two young boys drowned at Karachi's Sea View beach on Wednesday after being swept away by a strong wave into the sea during the Eid holidays. The two boys were cousins. As per the details, Danial and Sonu, residents of Pipri, accompanied by their friends arrived at the beach for a picnic. They were bathing at the beach when a strong wave suddenly swept them away into the sea. After being informed, the rescue officials rushed to the scene and launched an operation to recover the boys. After a six-hour-long operation, the rescuers succeeded in fishing out the body of Sonu while a search was underway for the other one. Their family said that the lives of the boys could have been saved by timely action. They said the administration had been informed about the incident but they did not launch the rescue operation on time. Their uncle, Iqbal, said that the boys' ages are 20 and 21. Their friends, Hamza and Naveed said that they tried their best to rescue their friends but failed. "Concerned department did not help us in recovering our drowning friends," they said.

## PM Gulf visit to strengthen ties

STAFF REPORT

KARACHI: Chief Petron SM Munir, President Zubair Tufail and other Leaders and members of United Business Group (UBG) have congratulated Mian Shabaz Sharif Prime Minister of Pakistan on his successful visit to Saudi Arabia. They said that the visit has strengthened and opened new vistas for economic, investment and trade ties between the two brotherly countries. They said that Pakistan Saudi Arabia relations are exceptional and

business community of Pakistan always holds economic relations with Saudi Arabia in high esteem. UBG also hailed the meeting of Prime Minister with Secretary General of OIC reaffirming Pakistan commitment to promoting the interest of Muslim Ummah as cornerstone of Pakistan foreign policy. The courageous steps by the PM in the meeting were also hailed by UBG particularly for Pakistan firm stand on Kashmir dispute and Pakistan commitment to playing a proactive role in matters of interest and concern to the OIC member states.

## Raza Kuli Khan's Chehlum held

BUREAU REPORT



PESHAWAR: The Chehlum of Mr. Raza Kuli Khan Khattak (1937-2022) former Chairman Biboojee Group of Companies, former Honourary Consul of France in khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province since 1969 was held today at 10 Fort Road Peshawar Cantt. He was elder son of late Gen. Habibullah Khan Khattak, elder brother of Gen. Ali Kuli Khan Khattak, Mr. Ahmad Kuli Khan Khattak, father of Sikan-dar kuli Khan Khattak. The chehlum ceremony was widely attended by family members well wishers and close family friends. Mr. Raza Kuli Khan Khattak was awarded two time French highest Civil Award order of merit by the French President for his vital role in developing strengthening the Pak French Relations in various fields of life like Education Cultural Business. He was a Chevalier de la legion d'honneur. He was also member Board of governors Aitchison college Lahore from where he got early education, before going to Oxford for higher education. He play his vital role in establishing French Cultural Centre and was remain its Board Chairman till its closer few years ago after serving more then 3 decades to People's of this province. He was known for his love with Polo and was remain President of Peshawar Polo Club, for promotion and encouragement of healthy education activities he was instrumental in many educational promotional activities in under develop area like Chitral, Kohat and other deserving areas. He was also chairman board of directors langlands school of chitral and Trustee Brooke Hospital of animals. The Chehlum was attended by large numbers of his well wishers apart from renowned political figures Mr. Anwar Saifullah Khan, Dr. Shafiq, Dr. Ashfaq.

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- The sealed bids, prepared in accordance with the instructions in the tender documents, must reach at "G" Section, MAG office, Kashmir Road, Rawalpindi Cantt on or before 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2022 by 10:30am. Bids will be opened on the same day at 11:00 am. This advertisement is also available on PPRa website at [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk).
- The firm will submit Bid Security amounting to Rs. 660,000/- (Including all taxes) in the shape of Bank Draft/ CDR drawn in favour of "DDO MAG's Office, Kashmir Road, Rawalpindi".
- The successful bidder will be required to submit 10% Performance Guarantee of the total value of the purchase order (including all Tax) in the shape of irrevocable & unconditional Bank Guarantee in favor of MAG Rawalpindi.
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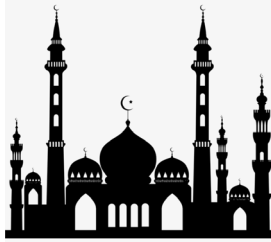
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## SERVICES



### Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	03:43 am
Zohr.....	12:05 pm
Asr.....	04:54 pm
Maghrib.....	06:55 pm
Isha.....	08:27 pm



### Hotels & Restaurants

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



### Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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### Emergency

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



### Complaints

<b>Water Tanker Service</b>	
E-7, F-10 & F-11.....	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8.....	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8.....	9266316
Wapda Islamabad.....	9217579
Wapda Rawalpindi	111-309-309

### Islamabad Metropolitan

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

### Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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**ISLAMABAD:** Abdirahman M Abdullahi Minister Counsellor of the Kenya High Commissioner presenting a shield to Dr. Abrar ul Hasnain, renowned dentist of the country, during his visit to the Dr. Abrar and Associates Dental Clinic located in the Sector F 8. The top Kenyan diplomat remained with Dr Abrar for some time and praised the professionalism of Abrar and Associates. – DNA

# No one allowed to misuse blasphemy law

Ashrafi assured the national and international stakeholders that neither the misuse of blasphemy law occurred in the last two years, nor would be in the future and the cases pertaining to blasphemy law would be treated on merit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative for Inter-faith Harmony and Middle East Maulana Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Wednesday said nobody should be allowed to misuse the blasphemy law in the country. Reacting to former human rights minister Dr Shireen Mazari's letter about "misusing" blasphemy law, written to the United Nations special rapporteurs, Ashrafi categorically stated in a video message that the misuse of blasphemy law would not be permitted on the basis of

personal and political grudges against anyone at all costs. He said he had already assured about it in his earlier media talk after discussing the issue in detail with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarar and Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah. Ashrafi – who is also the chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council – proposed Mazari raise the issue, if any, at the national forums like the court of law, Muttahida Ulema Board (MUB) and Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) keeping in view the sensitivity of the subject as an international drive against the blasphemy law was already in



progress. He said blasphemy cases lodged by the people against

the PTI leadership would be decided in the light of the Quran and Sunnah and the Constitution when they would come to MUB and CII through courts. Lamenting Mazari's letter, he said it would help provide a platform to the international conspirators for making propaganda in a bid to weaken the existing law. The PM's special representative expressed the hope that the PTI leadership and Shireen Mazari would withdraw from it as it was not in the national interest. Ashrafi said it was a collective responsibility of both the treasury and opposition benches in the parliament to keep it alive and

further strengthen it. He said when the PTI was in power, it was also its stance to desist from all sorts of malicious campaigns against this law. The chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council said instead of seeking national institutions' assistance, Mazari had launched an international drive against the blasphemy law which was not acceptable in any way. Ashrafi assured the national and international stakeholders that neither the misuse of blasphemy law occurred in the last two years, nor would be in the future and the cases pertaining to blasphemy law would be treated on merit.

# Minister directs to help passengers at Jeddah airport

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique on Tuesday directed the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) management to provide hotel accommodation to passengers facing delays in getting flights from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia after the airport authorities shifted all international flights to the North Terminal due to 'massive rush' of air travelers. Accordingly, the PIA Chief Executive Officer made a telephonic contact with the Jeddah airport authorities formally requested for the facilitation of Pakistani passengers, PIA spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan said in a news release. He said PIA Station Manager Tariq Majeed and Deputy Station Manager Khizar could be contacted at +966 54 3203438 and +966 55 4553342 respective for timely information about flights' timing. Passengers could also get information about flights from PIA Call Center by calling at 786 786 111. Earlier in a press statement, the spokesman while explaining the prevailing situation at the Jeddah airport said all airlines' flights

departing from Jeddah were facing extended delays. He said passengers at the airport were facing difficulties in check-in as there were only four boarding gates at the North Terminal that were insufficient to handle the increased number of travelers. So, he said, the delay was expected in tonight's (Tuesday) flights. Accordingly, the spokesman said the PIA administration had issued instructions to provide all possible facilities to its passengers, while the national flag carrier's officials in Jeddah were constantly in contact with the Saudi authorities. He said PIA's local teams in collaboration with the airport authorities were making arrangements to reduce delay time in the flights' departure. "The PIA's CEO himself is monitoring the situation." The spokesman said Minister for Aviation Khawaja Saad Rafique was also taking a moment-to-moment review of the situation so that the suffering of Pakistani passengers could be minimized. – APP

## 'PFC to participate in expo in Kazakhstan'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Furniture Council, in collaboration with Chenone, will also participate in "Made in Pakistan" expo being held at Almaty, Kazakhstan on May 19-23 to showcase Pakistani products and identify new global markets besides luring foreign investments. Chief Executive Officer PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq while talking to a delegation of exporters led by Abdullah Ishtiaq said here Thursday that 5-day expo starting from May 19 will provide an opportunity to present a world class range of Pak products and all other allied services. He said it is platform for import and export mainly with various and flexible pattern of trade. – DNA

## '11,650 MW electricity added to national grid during 2013-18'

ISLAMABAD: As many as 11,650 MW electricity was added to the national grid system during a period of 2013 to 2018. About 3000 MW clean energy had been added to the system during the said period, Ministry of Energy said in a statement here Thursday. Out of total 3000 MW, 1350 MW hydel and 1400 MW wind and solar energy was included in the system. Similarly, some 680 MW had been added to the national grid through nuclear energy source during 2013 to 2018, it further said. For the first time, work on local Thar Coal based projects was started in the country during the said period. Thar Coal power generation projects were started under China Pakistan Economic Corridor, the Power Division said. 660 MW Thar Coal power project has already been supply cheap electricity. Work on 884 MW Sukki Kinari hydel project was started in 2018 which would start generation by 2024. – DNA

## PM, Barjees Tahir discuss political situation

DNA

LAHORE: Member National Assembly Barjees Tahir called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Thursday and discussed current political situation in the country. During the meeting, MNA Barjees Tahir congratulated the prime minister on his successful visits to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

## CDA, FWO revive Rawal Dam project

DNA

ISLAMABAD: CDA with help of FWO revives rawal dam project. Asphaltic base course for slip towards serena has been completed. This is a major slip road and forms part of the project. Now it has not only been completed but ABC has also been done. As for balance works cda sources revealed that FWO has been mobilised and by 15th May will be employed in full force to complete the project before the designated timeline in consonance with instruction of PM.

## Pak to become democratic state: Sana

ISLAMABAD: Extending Eid greetings to people, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said on Tuesday that Pakistan has started its journey for becoming a genuine and vibrant Islamic, constitutional and democratic state. In his Eid-ul-Fitr message, the minister prayed Allah Almighty to accept all the acts of worship performed by the Muslims during the month of Ramazan and prayed Allah Almighty to protect Pakistan from all kinds of challenges. He vowed providing solace to the people with each passing day during their stint in government. – APP

## 46,557 virus cases reported

RAWALPINDI: As many as 46, 557 established COVID cases had been recorded, while 1764 had lost their life since the pandemic from April 2020 to May 5th 2022 in the district. Chief Executive Officer(-CEO) District Health Authority Dr Faiza Kanwal told APP that 45,212 patients had been discharged after recovery. She informed that among people who had died due to this fatal disease, 1,333 were Rawalpindi's residents, while 431 belonged to outside districts of 1,764 victims. Presently, the number of active cases was 13 and quarantined in home isolation, while no patient was admitted to any health facility in the district. – APP

## CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY WATER SUPPLY DIRECTORATE (Production Division-I)

### TENDER FOR THE PRE-QUALIFICATION OF ALUM SULPHATE (MANUFACTURES ONLY).

CDA intends to procure Alum Sulphate (Alum Coagulant for water purification) for its use at Simly Water Treatment Plant and other various water locations in Islamabad.

The interested firms (manufactures only) are hereby invited to provide their samples along with other relevant details for pre-qualification. Required quantity and the specification of Alum Sulphate are detailed below.

A)	Quantity required	1000 M. Ton (Subject to increase / decrease.
B)	Specification	
i)	Alumina as Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	17% (Minimum).
ii)	Iron as Fe	0.5% (Maximum)
iii)	Insoluble Matter	0.5% (Maximum)
iv)	Toxic Impurities	
a)	Arsenic	3.0 PPM (Maximum)
b)	Lead	6.0 PPM (Maximum)
c)	Other	Almost Nil with no toxic effects.
d)	Moisture	20% (Maximum)

The interested manufactures, whose sample shall conform to the above mentioned specifications and determined satisfactory by CDA, shall be asked separately to give their prices thereafter.

The samples along with the requisite details and schedule of delivery should reach to this office on or before 16.05.2022.

Dr. Director (P-I), CDA  
Room No.165, Mayor Secretariat,  
Sector G-6 Markaz, Islamabad.  
(Ph: 051-9217589)

# Tourists throng Murree to enjoy pleasant weather during Eid

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The most famous hill station Murree attracted a large number of tourists during Eid-ul-Fitr holidays particularly on Tuesday and Wednesday as they reached 'Queen of the Mountains' from different areas to enjoy the pleasant weather. Rawalpindi district administration had finalized all the arrangements to ensure security of the visitors and facilitate them particularly during Eid ul Fitr holidays. According to a district administration spokesman, the DC urged the tourists to observe traffic rules on the roads of Murree to avoid traffic mess and any untoward incident during Eid-ul-

Fitr holidays. Special teams had been formed to facilitate the tourists, he said adding, parking of the vehicles was not allowed outside the parking areas. There was a complete ban on illegal parking in Murree. He said main control room had been set up at Jinnah Hall in Unit office Murree, which could be contacted on 051-9269015-16-18 besides, Highway control room 051-9269189 and Traffic Police control room 051-9269200. "The beautiful climate of Murree during summer attracts a large number of tourists so motorists face severe traffic congestion," he said adding that traffic moves slower due to heavy traffic load as compared to the normal days. He said, the DC had

advised the tourists to avoid wrong parking, double lines, speeding and taking selfies in the middle of the roads. He said, a special plan had been formulated for Murree under which 860 personnel including 500 cops and 360 CTP officials were performing their duties to facilitate the visitors. Rawalpindi district police had launched Murree Tourism Police for the convenience and protection of the tourists. Patriata and Paghari Police Stations had also been made functional for the safety and service of citizens and tourists. A specially trained force had been deployed for Murree Tourism Police, he added. He said Rawalpindi district administration, district police and CTP on the di-

rectives of Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shehbaz had taken solid steps to ease traffic flow and facilitate tourists in Murree. The officers of the district administration, district police and CTP were present in the field to monitor the situation. All possible steps were being taken to ease traffic flow and ensure smooth flow of traffic on the roads of Murree, he added. Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Noor ul Amin Mengal and Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Tahir Farooq visited Murree on Wednesday and reviewed all the arrangements. Due to solid steps taken by the authorities concerned, traffic flow was totally under control in Murree, he added.



## Briefs

## PM is well aware of national issues

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior Leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Tariq Fazl Chaudhry on Thursday said Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif is a competent person as he is well aware about all the national issues. Talking to PTV, the prime minister wanted to put the country on the path of speedy development as he was performing his duty during the Eid holidays. He said PM Shahbaz Sharif had great experience to run the government affairs in smoothly manners and he is doing good job with his best team. He said Pakistan is a nuclear Islamic country and wanted to hold good relations with all over the world on equality basis, adding the country was full of natural resources but dire need to utilize them in an effective manner. Tariq Fazl Chaudhry said the country has bright future and it would be progressed as per desire of the Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and dream of Allama Muhammad Iqbal as well. People would see fruitful results of the prudent policies of the present government in days to come, adding the prime minister would visit to China soon for speedy completion of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects as it was the game changer project not only for Pakistan but for the entire region.

Replying to a question, he said the previous government of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) did nothing for the development of the country and welfare of its people except using derogatory language against other. He said due to effective policies of the present government people would see that every day would be better than previous in days to come.

## Roads are giving deserted look in capital

ISLAMABAD: Since the moon night, the weather of twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi has turned pleasant due to a spell of rain occurred from Tuesday till Wednesday. Keeping in view the weather condition, there was seen rush of people at the recreational points but the roads of the federal capital are still giving deserted look.

According to a survey by this scribe it is found out that most of the people hailing from various areas of the country who were discharging their professional and official duties in the federal capital had left for their native towns ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr to celebrate the holy festival with their loved ones. While talking to Ilyas Chaudhry, a resident of Sector G-9/4, he said during the last two years, the people could not see their kith and kin due to the prevalence of COVID-19 pandemic even at the moments of happiness or grief.

As soon as they got a sigh of relief from the viral infection, they planned the trip to meet their relatives especially on the auspicious occasion of Eid, adding he said large number of houses were vacant in his locality as their dwellers had gone to their ancestral areas for Eid celebration. - APP

## Nation stands shoulder to shoulder with Army: UBG

The business leaders noted that enemy countries have set fire to Balochistan and their aim is to thwart CPEC but the security forces are dealing with the insurgency in the best possible way which is highly laudable

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Leading businessmen of Pakistan have said that the entire nation and the business community is standing by the side of the armed forces and political manoeuvres of failed politicians cannot mislead them. They said that the unholy designs of those who are conspiring to provoke people against institutions and trigger civil war in Pakistan will fail. All the efforts to malign Pakistan Army, ISI and other institutions guarding our geographical and ideological boundaries will be unsuccessful, said President UBG Zubair Tufail, Chief Coordinator UBG Malik Sohail, and former President ICCI Muhammad Ahmed. In a joint statement issued here today, they

said that because of these important institutions 220 million people feel protected. The business leaders noted that enemy countries have set fire to Balochistan and their aim is to thwart CPEC but the security forces are dealing with the insurgency in the best possible way which is highly laudable. They noted that General Bajwa has been working very patiently but some elements are bent on spreading anarchy in the country. People should know that there is a limit to patience, after which there an action would be taken against miscreants. Army has played a very positive role during the recent political and constitutional crisis and its leadership saved the country from tremendous political instability for which the credit goes to General Qamar Javed Bajwa. The judiciary also took timely action and

fulfilled the requirements of justice which saved the country from anarchy, they added. During the crisis, some elements were pushing the country towards martial law but their conspiracy was foiled, they observed. Zubair Tufail said Gen. Bajwa has always taken decisions in accordance with the national interests and in the way he tackled the recent crisis he proved his mettle. The limping economy was being ruined by some frustrated politicians while branding hundreds of politicians as traitors made the country a laughing stock but this conspiracy was also foiled. Now the defeated elements have started a campaign to discredit the army which can lead to civil war while the nation is looking toward the army to foil the conspiracies. The Army Chief was second to none in military diplomacy, he remedied

the damage done by the political rhetoric and further improved relations with various important countries. Muhammad Ahmed and Malik Sohail Husain said that the services of the Army Chief to improve the economic situation are also part of history. He had detailed meetings with economists, prominent investors, and noted business personalities restoring their confidence. They said that the role of General Bajwa in opening the Kartarpur corridor, and boosting the morale of the army is highly laudable. In the recent nerve-racking political crisis, he handled the situation with utmost wisdom and patience and pulled the nation out of the problem allowing the masses and businessmen to take a sigh of relief, they observed.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Thailand (2nd from right) and his embassy staff riding bikes on the occasion of Eid. - DNA

## PTI laid economic landmines to discredit successors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Thursday said the previous government laid economic mines for the present government which is becoming difficult to deal with. The former government announced a huge subsidy on electricity and oil in its last days which is costing up to three billion rupees daily, it said.

In addition, the previous government deliberately planned to reduce oil and gas in the country to tarnish the image of the new government, but their de-

cision is also hurting the people, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President PEW. He said that despite the agreement with the IMF, the government was not ready to withdraw the oil subsidy as it would provoke a public backlash. For keeping fuel prices capped at current levels for the next fortnight, the cash-strapped government will have to pay Rs72.33/litre on diesel and Rs30.31/litre on petrol as price differential claim to the oil sector, denting the national kitty by another Rs40 billion which is not affordable. Murtaza Mughal said that any friendly country except China and no international lender including IMF and the

World Bank, will lend to Pakistan unless the US wanted it. He added that the investigation into the multi-billion rupee under-invoicing scam in which a prominent businessman linked to PTI will remain inconclusive.

The car import scandal is being investigated by the same institution which has helped the accused in the scam to make a windfall during the previous regime, he said. If the government wants to bring this tax evasion to a logical conclusion, then it should avoid departmental inquiries and a judicial inquiry should be ordered, he said.

## Eid Festivities continue, citizens throng picnic spots

RAWALPINDI: The festivities on the third day of Eid-ul-Fitr continue as people on Thursday thronged recreational places and picnic spots to celebrate Eid. In twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi people are visiting their relatives, friends and near and dear ones, the citizens were seen flocking to several picnic spots and parks. The families visiting the parks of the city complained that over charging, sale of substandard food items and non-availability of quality products are main cause of concern. The vendors took full benefit of the situation as the concerned authorities failed to control the quality and rates of the commodities rather there was no check and balance in this regard and the shopkeepers were given free hand. The citizens demanded of the authorities to take action against the violators and those fleecing the tourists. "The food-items being offered at the canteen were tantamount to fleecing and the children were being robbed off their Eid is at different parts," said Mushtaq a visitor at Ayub Park. A special control room had also been set up at Deputy Commissioner (DC) Office Rawalpindi which is working round the clock to cope with any emergency situation. - DNA

The parks in Rawalpindi were specially decorated to make them attractive for the visitors. The residents of Rawalpindi city and adjoining areas on Wednesday and Thursday thronged different parks to enjoy the second and third day of Eid-ul-Fitr as the families along with children were seen at

the city parks and picnic spots and there was also rush at restaurants to enjoy dishes of different kinds. Having spent the first day of Eid on Tuesday on ritual exercise of greeting relatives, friends and near and dear ones, the citizens were seen flocking to several picnic spots and parks.

The families visiting the parks of the city complained that over charging, sale of substandard food items and non-availability of quality products are main cause of concern. The vendors took full benefit of the situation as the concerned authorities failed to control the quality and rates of the commodities rather there was no check and balance in this regard and the shopkeepers were given free hand.

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## PM phones services chiefs to extend Eid greetings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday telephoned the services chiefs and extended the greetings of Eid-ul-Fitr to them.

The prime minister phoned Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadeem Raza and greeted him on Eid.

He also telephonically interacted with Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Naval Chief Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaher Ahmed Baber Sidhu, and exchanged Eid greetings with them.

## Imports increased tremendously during the PTI era

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Thursday said the previous government increased imports more than exports which weakened the local currency and eroded the foreign exchange reserves. Exchange rate erosion expanded poverty and misery in the country making life difficult for the man on the street, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that a weakened rupee boosted exports by 24.8 percent from July 2021 to March 2022 but it made the life of an average person a living hell. The exports increased but imported outweighed the achievement which increased by 39.9 percent to over 62 billion dollars eating up forex reserves; he informed. The business leader said that no meaningful action was taken to contain the import of luxuries. The exports to China jumped from 1.21 billion dollars to 3.28 billion dollars, but imports jumped by 3.28 billion dollars to 13.3 billion dollars which was unsustainable. Mr. Butt noted that economic misgovernance peaked during the PTI regime, public debt jumped to 42.8 trillion, Pakistan's exports were over 13 percent of the GDP in 2013, which fell to 10 percent while the global average remains 25.5 percent. He said that Pakistan has no other option to boost exports discounting failed strategies and hefty subsidies to the club of billionaires to revive the economy which is in a deep mess.

## Anti-Polio drops administered at transit points during Eid

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) District Health Authority Dr Faiza Kanwal Thursday said anti-polio drops were administered at all city entry and exit points during the Eid holidays. In the wake of two recent polio cases identified in North Waziristan, the Punjab Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) had decided to continue vaccination of children under five years of age at all transit sites in Punjab during the Eid Holidays. The EOC informed that to prevent the spread of the virus, anti-polio drops were administered at 14 entry and exit points of the district while around 90 polio workers had performed their duties despite the Eid holidays. She said people travelled to outside districts or provinces on Eid days to meet their near ones, so it had become obligatory to administer drops to children to save them from this crippling disease. - APP

## World Press Freedom Day observed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The world press freedom day was observed across the globe including Pakistan on Tuesday (May 3) aiming to appreciate journalists' hard work, risking lives for revealing the truth behind an incident, event or scandal. This year's theme was "Journalism under digital siege," that spotlights the multiple ways in which journalism was endangered by surveillance and digitally-mediated attacks on journalists, and the consequences of all this on public trust in digital communications.

The special day celebrates the spirit of journalism and recognizes the dedication of journalists. It was extremely significant, as the United Nations considers it an opportunity to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom, assess the state of press freedom across the globe, defend the attacks on media independence, and pay tribute to the journalists who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.

The origin of World Press Day dates back to 1991, when an African Journalist present at a UNESCO conference in Windhoek, which was based on 'Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Media', opened up about an idea to encourage press freedom in different parts of the world. UNESCO adopted the Windhoek declaration on May 3 in 1993, which aimed toward the 'development of a free, independent and pluralistic press.

## 3 Killed, 3 Injured in car incident

FAISAL MUNIR

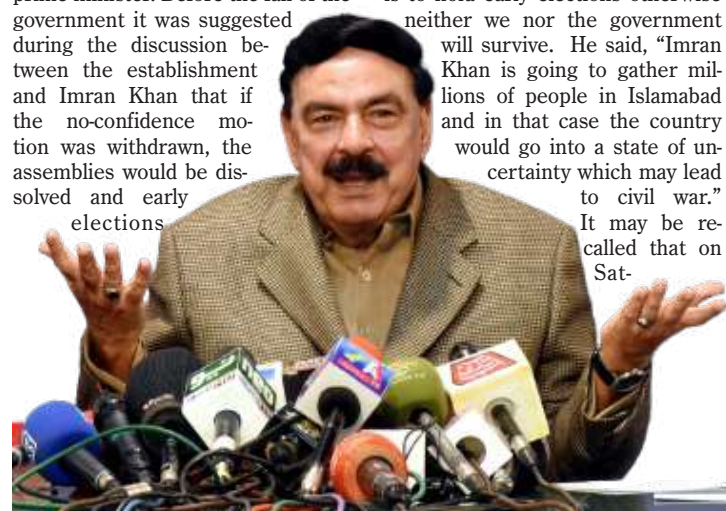
ATTOCK: Three persons, including two brothers were killed and three others sustained injuries in an accident that occurred near PindiGheb area of Attock district. Rescue sources reported on Monday. According to details, a car was heading towards Islamabad from Bakkar when suddenly it turned turtle near PindiGheb. As a result, two brothers died on the spot. The injured including women were shifted to nearby hospital. Police reached the spot and started investigation. As per initial reports, the driver of the car could not control over the steering when he saw a motorcyclist.

## Imran ready for talks to hold early elections

He said, "Imran Khan is going to gather millions of people in Islamabad and in that case the country would go into a state of uncertainty which may lead to civil war"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Awami Muslim League Chief and former interior minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed says former Prime Minister Imran Khan is ready to hold talks with Shahbaz Sharif's government to hold early general elections, but it will require the guarantee of powerful quarters. In an exclusive interview with Voice of America in Islamabad, he said that it was not correct to say that the PTI's long march was aimed at enforcing martial law in the country but it was for holding early general elections. He said that Imran Khan did not want to shake hands with the leaders of Shahbaz Sharif's coalition government but there could be talks regarding elections if the establishment gives guarantee. It may be recalled that after the success of the no-confidence motion



against Imran Khan last month, former opposition parties have formed a coalition government with PML-N president Shahbaz Sharif as its prime minister. Before the fall of the government it was suggested during the discussion between the establishment and Imran Khan that if the no-confidence motion was withdrawn, the assemblies would be dissolved and early elections

would be held. Sheikh Rashid said that the army wants to maintain the continuity of democracy in the country and the only way to maintain it is to hold early elections otherwise neither will survive. He said, "Imran Khan is going to gather millions of people in Islamabad and in that case the country would go into a state of uncertainty which may lead to civil war." It may be recalled that on Sat-

urday, PTI chief Imran Khan announced a march towards Islamabad in the last week of May. Sheikh Rashid says that if a large number of people gathered in Islamabad on the call of Imran Khan, then khan's politics will reign and his only demand is to hold early elections. He said that PTI did not want to topple the government but the participants of the long march would not return from Islamabad without announcement of the date of general elections. Talking about the fall of the PTI government, he said that there were some misunderstandings with the institutions which should not have happened. He said that the army is with the democratic government but something had happened due to which the coalition parties joined hands with the opposition. "The whole BAP (Balochistan Awami Party) left us, MQM and half of Q League left the government, so we have made some mistake."

Estd. 1860

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## EU's Russian oil ban

THE European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen's proposal on Wednesday for a complete ban on Russian oil, with crude imports into EU phased out over six months and refined products stopped by the end of the year, will have far-reaching consequences for the global economies and energy markets. If agreed upon by the EU, the embargo would follow the US and Britain, which have already imposed such bans as part of sanctions on Russia following the war in Ukraine. In the short run, the supply shortages are going to drive up oil prices and for the long run, global crude flows are likely to re-work around the EU ban, with more Russian oil heading to key Asian importers such as China and India while more crude from the US and the Middle East making its way to Europe. Even with a total ban, its impact on overall financial sanctions on Russia, at least in the short term, looks bleak as higher global crude prices are going to drive up Russian export revenue. As for the longer term, if Russia is able to sell its spare crude in Asia, it could, to a great extent, blunt these sanctions. Additionally, with this ban, the EU also risks the possibility of a Russian retaliation with a total shutdown of natural gas supplies. Within the EU bloc, for Hungary and Slovakia, both landlocked, it will be a logistical nightmare to use alternate sources. Under the EU plan, these two will be given until the end of 2023 to wean themselves off Russian oil. By keeping the Russian oil taps open, even in the interim, could mean tempting at least a few others in the EU to route their imports through these channels. Brent crude rose 4 per cent on Wednesday following the announcement. Undoubtedly, the EU ban on Russian oil will have huge consequences for the supply and prices of end-user products such as gasoline, diesel and jet fuel that could further transmitted to inflation and, ultimately, derail the post-pandemic economic recovery around the world.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 303

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

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## Ideas of growth

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

SOME children of our society, unfortunately, are compelled to study at tuition centers after returning from school. This signals the incompetency of the schools to complete the course work or to make the students understand the syllabus. The growth of individuals results when he/she is given time to explore their world and experience it on their own. The daily routine of taking classes, rote learning, taking tuition, and passing examinations is a cycle that each student passes through. Generations have gone through this cycle and more will do the same. Growth at the intellectual level comes when students are allowed to learn on their own, a concept that is known as experiential learning and is pursued in business schools. Schools and colleges should ask students to study textbooks but the teachers should use visual aids to explore more about the given subject. Teachers can take children on field trips to parks to explore more about the anatomy of the plant, a subject included in science in primary classes. Students of class nine and matric can be taken to laboratories where they can explore more about the concepts of chemistry and physics. The textbooks do present content as a means of disseminating information. Real learning will come when students become a part of the process as observers. The educational system must be revamped to produce a generation of thinkers and curious youth who want to know more about the subject and are not compelled to rote learn. The objective of passing examinations has been shunning the concept of learning. Schools and colleges should be the hubs where knowledge is spread and children are inspired to learn beyond textbooks. Only then will we create the next generation of curious minds. Otherwise, rote learning will give them a degree but without any value.

# “Thailand and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation: A Gateway to the Muslim World”

Thanawat Sirikul

The Deputy Prime Minister's trip to the 48th Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC achieved two valuable goals. It promoted and strengthened the role of Thailand in a key international forum and it deepened market links with Islamic countries, both undeniably needed in the next phase for Thailand's post-Covid economic recovery



IN the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on people's health and the economy. It has also severely curtailed the promotion and furtherance of international cooperation, which is arguably one of the very tools needed to drive and revive Thailand's economic growth and development. The reopening of Thailand, the resumption of people-to-people contact and the convening of important meetings under key frameworks of cooperation all represent golden opportunities that must not be missed. Instead, they must be taken full advantage of, in order to expand the type of cooperation that is strategically targeted towards assisting post-COVID recovery of the Thai economy. It should come as no surprise then, that H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, travelled to Islamabad, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, to attend the 48th Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC-CFM 48) on 22-23 March 2022. Cur-

rently, the OIC comprises 57 member countries whose combined population stands at approximately 1.5 billion people worldwide. It is, therefore, irrefutably the premier intergovernmental organization of the Muslim world. It represents an important platform for Thailand to share her efforts on promoting multiculturalism and pluralism in Thai society and the Southern Border Provinces through policies that respond to the needs of Thai Muslim communities in the country. The OIC also serves as a forum for the exchange of knowledge and information. Most importantly, it is a gateway through which cooperation between Thailand and the Muslim world can be further enhanced.

With the presence of so many of his esteemed counterparts during the said meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister was able to hold bilateral meetings on issues of mutual interest with key member countries of the OIC such as Saudi Arabia, whose bilateral relations with OIC have recently been normalized, Bahrain, Egypt, Turkey and the OIC Secretary-General, all with a view to promoting bilateral cooperation and expanding economic opportunities for Thailand.

A case in point is that currently the Office of the Central Islamic Council of Thailand, as the National Halal Accreditation agency of Thailand, and the Halal Stand-

ard Institute of Thailand, have joined the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SIMIC) as observers. The latter plays a crucial role in formulating and certifying global halal standards and so the implementation and certification of these standards will increase the opportunity for Thai halal products to be exported to Muslim countries and Muslim communities the world over. This represents an enormous market with high potential for growth. Engaging with the OIC and strengthening relations with OIC member countries therefore, is not only beneficial but critical for Thailand, if we are to realize the government's vision for Thailand to be a leading country in the development, production and export of agricultural products and food products that are internationally recognized at the global level through Thai Halal standards and the use of religious principles, science and technology and innovation, by 2027. Other areas of cooperation, beyond the expansion of economic opportunities, will also have impact, such as cooperation in the area of human capital investment. The Islamic Development Bank (IDB), under the aegis of the OIC, offers scholarships to Thai Muslim communities in Thailand. Similarly, the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, provides training courses in fields

which Thailand has expertise, for OIC member countries under the framework of multilateral and bilateral cooperation. TICA offers training courses, for example, on sustainable development and public health to various countries in Asia and Africa. Thailand has also continued to provide assistance to Muslim minorities and communities under the framework of the United Nations. In addition, Thailand has access to the Islamic Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) as an observer, to further cooperation on capacity building programmes. The Deputy Prime Minister's trip to the 48th Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC achieved two valuable goals. It promoted and strengthened the role of Thailand in a key international forum and it deepened market links with Islamic countries, both undeniably needed in the next phase for Thailand's post-COVID economic recovery. The trip also reinforced the understanding that the OIC is an important gateway for Thailand to foster strong and meaningful people-to-people contact, not only for Thailand's Muslim communities with other Muslim communities all over the world, but for each and every one of us to benefit from and appreciate.

— The writer is the Deputy Director-General, Department of Information Ministry of Foreign Affairs

# The Russia-Ukraine conflict and de-globalization

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The Covid-19 epidemic has hit the global supply system. Therefore, to secure the safety of the supply line, it is necessary to actively expand and break the supply

DURING the last four decades, the foreign policy and economic policy of the champion of globalization have been characterized by isolationism and protectionism. By adjustment of their policies, United States have undermined the process of globalization and encouraged retribution between various economic camps and interest groups. The data released by the US Department of Commerce shows that the deficit in US goods and services in 2021 was 859.1 billion which has increased 27% over the previous year, which is about 4% of GDP.

The election of Donald Trump as US President since 2016, Brexit, and the Sino-US trade war point

to threats to a global system that is becoming increasingly problematic to the economic system of the globe. The Covid-19 epidemic and the Russia-Ukraine war have exacerbated the current tensions and have exposed an unexpected crisis of the economies of the world and is weakening the consensus on globalization. As of April 11, Yale University's figures show that more than 600 multinational corporations have withdrawn from Russia or ceased their business. According to Lawrence Bone, chief economist at the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, this de-globalization has deep and unpredictable effects. Under this new trend towards regionalism, the global values, supply lines and industrial chains may have been severely affected. Undoubtedly, the current global political and economic landscape is in a new and unprecedented adjustment, and the uncertainty created by the economic separation, first and foremost it will affect multinational corporations. However, this situation is also creating opportunities for countries such as those that have the ability to find new markets and economic opportunities and to attract corporations and companies.

As the conflict between Russia and Ukraine intensifies, the confrontation between Western countries and Russia has spread from the national level to the corporate level. British Petroleum company has announced on February 27, 2022 that it would relinquish its 19.75% stake from the Russian integrated energy company Rosneft, which is about half of its oil and gas reserves and one-third of its production. In addition, dozens of energy companies have stopped working in Russia and announced to abandon their Russian operations.

Following the 2008 financial crisis, multinational corporations began to respond to the operational risks posed by conflicting regulatory measures in different countries by shrinking and winding up their businesses. Since 2008, Citibank has sold its related business in Germany, Turkey, Brazil, Egypt and other countries. Now, in March 2022, Citibank has agreed to sell

its Indian retail banking sector to Axis Bank. Citibank is not the only bank responding to the challenges of de-globalization by shrinking its business and slimming its assets. The decision of Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) to re-focus on the role of Asia in its growth strategy will surely strengthen its leading position in Asia, as Asia has always been the bank's earnings in the regional markets. According to the 2021 financial report, Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation pre-tax profit in the Asian market was \$ 12.249 billion, which is 64.8% of the group's total profit. However, Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation is still regarded as a British bank. The bank, which has been one of the four largest local banks in the UK since 1992, moved its headquarters to London in 1993 and now has ten major shareholders and other asset companies in United States and British jurisdiction. Asia-Pacific is stuck in a complex game of big countries, especially with mainland China and Hong Kong focusing on business.

The Covid-19 epidemic and the Russia-Ukraine war have significantly accelerated the de-globalization. With more and more Western sanctions on Russia, many countries that are not staunch allies of the United States are now realizing the dangers of being economically attached to the United States and its allies. It is also a strategic challenge for the multinational corporations to realize that the sanctions imposed by the West have begun to merge with the risk areas, including cyber threats, protectionism, global mobility, dynamic operations, corporate and contractual reservations. The states and the multinational corporations represented by Hong Kong and the Shanghai Banking Corporation are facing a number of dilemmas.

In the current international political and economic scenario, the elements and scope of national security have been gradually expanded. In addition to traditional security threats, countries have focused on technical security, cybersecurity, environmental protection, and energy security. However, no matter what rules

are adopted, multinational corporations are unable to achieve effective hedging due to the complexity of many different national regulations and lack of mutual transparency. Therefore, business localization or regional integration for different markets or interest groups will be a general trend in the future. Multinational corporations can only effectively avoid the dangers of known or unknown regulatory policy by configuring different systems, as the United States has adopted a two-pronged policy towards China under the Trump administration, bilateral economic cooperation between China and the United States and Cultural exchanges are affected in many ways. However, in general, cooperation between China and the United States is still relatively smooth. Now that the massive economic rift between the West and Russia has proved the possibility of a comprehensive de-coupling, the Asia-Pacific region must devise a timely mechanism to deal with this potential situation. The Covid-19 epidemic has hit the global supply system. Therefore, to secure the safety of the supply line, it is necessary to actively expand and break the supply. China's Belt and Road Initiative has become a symbol of global cooperation, even amid the broader trend towards globalization. The Belt and Road Initiative will bring new opportunities for global business, allowing multinational corporations and small to medium-sized enterprises to explore emerging markets and to expand business opportunities with China, ASEAN, the Middle East, and Central and Eastern Europe. China's direct investment in the Belt and Road countries will reach \$20.3 billion in 2021, up 14.1% year on year. Now multinational corporations should use their global networks and operational experience to deepen infrastructure construction, improve the investment climate and promote future markets in the Belt and Road countries. At the same time, multinational corporations should take advantage of the fact that the risks of settlement markets can be minimized and ensured. These multinational corporations will be able to fully enjoy the benefits of the Belt and Road Initiative.



## Briefs

## Govt to form commission to probe plot

FROM PAGE 01

said that Imran's corruption, loot and plunder were the cause of ruined economy, unemployment and worst inflation. During the rule of Imran Khan, the prices of flour, sugar, Ghee, medicines and fertilizer remained at the highest level in history of the country, she maintained.

"Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has given relief to the people from inflation of years in just two weeks time", Marriyum Aurangzeb remarked. She said that today, after four years, people were getting cheap sugar, wheat flour and ghee because today cartels and mafia were not imposed on them. Taking a dig on the PTI leadership, she said the hue and cry was not about foreign conspiracy, rather it was the mourning for rescue of Farah Gogi. Denouncing the policies of the previous government, she said economic terrorists who planted "economic mines" were today mourning their own incompetence, loot and plunder.

## PM orders emergency relief goods for Afghans

FROM PAGE 01

Trust Forum. Shehbaz Sharif said floods could worsen the situation of ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. He pointed out that if timely action was not taken, there was a danger of increasing casualties. He said the international community, particularly the United Nations, should launch a programme to help the people of Afghanistan by providing food, medical aid and shelter to the displaced. The prime minister prayed for the patience of the families who lost their loved ones in floods.

## Imran to hold public gathering...

FROM PAGE 01

on PTI's social media accounts, the former prime minister said that he will be addressing the gathering in Mianwali just before Maghrib prayers on Friday. The PTI leader said that the Mianwali public gathering is part of the movement he has begun to rid the country of the "imported" government and "most corrupt" people. He added that he was coming to the people of Mianwali to give a boost to them before he gives the call for a long march to Islamabad.

## Gill injured in car...

FROM PAGE 01

after receiving medical treatment, he added. Sources said that the accident took place due to the negligence and carelessness of the driver. Terming the accident a "murder attempt", Shahbaz said his car was chased and deliberately hit "under a plot." "I am standing by [Imran] Khan and will continue to do... I want to tell the nation that they will also attack Khan. They will try to silence us at all costs," he wrote on Twitter. "External conspirators, its local handlers and traitors know that [Imran] Khan and his party members will not remain silent," he said, adding that they will expose everyone.

## France, India call for...

FROM PAGE 01

imports much of its military hardware from Russia, has long walked a diplomatic tightrope between the West and Moscow – notably refusing to denounce the latter or vote against it at the United Nations over its actions in Ukraine. However, only France condemned "Russian forces' illegal and unjustified aggression against Ukraine". The two countries said they would "respond in a coordinated and multilateral way" to the risk the conflict would intensify a global food crisis, with Ukraine one of the world's main wheat producers.

## Sell seized Russian assets to rebuild Ukraine: EU chief

BRUSSELS: The EU should confiscate and sell Russian assets it has seized and use the proceeds to rebuild war-scarred Ukraine, EU chief Charles Michel said in an interview published Thursday. The suggestion echoes an idea already floated in the United States, and comes as EU and US task forces hunt down and grab yachts, mansions, bank accounts, helicopters and artworks owned by Russian oligarchs sanctioned

by the West. The EU said early last month it had frozen 30 billion euros (\$32 billion) in assets linked to blacklisted Russian and Belarusian individuals. The question now is what to do with those assets. "Personally, I am absolutely convinced that this is extremely important not only to freeze assets, but also to make possible to confiscate it, to make it available for the rebuilding of the country (Ukraine)," Michel, president of

the European Council, told the Interfax-Ukraine news agency. He was the first high-ranking EU official to propose the confiscation of oligarchs' assets, his spokesman confirmed to AFP. Ukraine's government in April estimated the cost of rebuilding after the war to be at least \$600 billion (565 billion euros). The EU, US, Britain and Canada have been steadily expanding their lists of wealthy sanctioned Russians deemed to

influence or profit from Moscow's invasion of its pro-Western neighbour. Last week, US President Joe Biden proposed oligarchs' seized assets be "sold off" to "remedy the harm Russia caused and to help build Ukraine". But the American Civil Liberties Union has warned any legislation in that sense could violate due-process protections, as the targeted oligarchs would have no recourse to challenge the confiscations.

Similar legal concerns dog EU moves along the same line, acknowledged Michel, a lawyer by training. Confiscation of sanctioned individuals' assets "is not so simple" and would be "a difficult and long process," he said. But he said he has tasked the European Council's legal service to come up with ways of making it work "in line with the principles of rule of law". - APP

## World sees nearly 15M covid related deaths

GENEVA: The total death toll "associated directly or indirectly with the COVID-19 pandemic" between Jan. 1, 2020 and Dec. 31, 2021, was around 14.9 million, according to a new study released by the World Health Organization on Thursday. "These sobering data not only point to the impact of the pandemic but also to the need for all countries to invest in more resilient health systems that can sustain essential health services during crises, including stronger health information systems," WHO chief Tedros Ghebreyesus said. "WHO is committed to working with all countries to strengthen their health information systems to generate better data for better decisions and better outcomes." Excess mortality is calculated as the difference between the number of deaths and the number that would be expected in the absence of the pandemic based on data from earlier years. It includes deaths associated with COVID-19 directly

(due to the disease) or indirectly (due to the pandemic's impact on health systems and society). Deaths linked indirectly to COVID-19 are attributable to other health conditions where people were unable to access prevention and treatment due to systems that were overburdened by the pandemic. The estimated number of excess deaths can also be influenced by deaths averted during the pandemic due to lower risks of certain events, like motor-vehicle accidents or occupational injuries. Most of the excess deaths (84%) are concentrated in South-East Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Some 68% of excess deaths are concentrated in just 10 countries globally. Middle-income countries account for 81% of the 14.9 million excess deaths (53% in lower-middle-income countries and 28% in upper-middle-income countries) over the 24 months, with high-income and low-income countries each accounting for 15% and 4%, respectively. - APP

## Real Madrid stun Man City to reach Champions League final

MADRID: Karim Benzema scored an extra-time penalty as Real Madrid pulled off another astonishing comeback in the Champions League to stun Manchester City 3-1 on Wednesday and book a showdown with Liverpool in the final. City looked certain to go through when Riyad Mahrez put them 1-0 up and 5-3 ahead on aggregate but Rodrygo, on as a substitute, scored an incredible late double, his goals in the 90th and 91st minutes sending the tie to extra time. With City still reeling, Real Madrid landed the knock-out blow as Benzema earned and then converted a spot-kick to snatch a 6-5 win on aggregate, with another remarkable fightback at the Santiago Bernabeu added to the club's long list of magical European nights. "It's the greatness of this club," said Real coach Carlo Ancelotti. "It's a club that doesn't allow you to give up even if it seems everything is over. It gives you the strength to keep going, to fight, to believe." Ancelotti said his players had watched a video before

the game, showing eight of Real Madrid's comebacks this season, for inspiration. "At the end it said 'There's one more left' and we have achieved it," Ancelotti said, after becoming the first coach to reach five Champions League finals. Madrid had already performed the unlikely feat of rescue acts to defeat both Paris Saint-Germain in the last 16 and Chelsea in the quarter-finals. Like PSG and Chelsea before them, City will wonder how they emerged as losers from a match they largely controlled and there will be fresh scrutiny on coach Pep Guardiola, who, for all his success, goes another year without leading City to the European glory they so crave. "It's tough for us, I can't deny that," said Guardiola. "We were so close." City's collapse would have been almost inexplicable had it been against anyone other than Real Madrid, who advance to their 17th final in the competition. They are a victory against Liverpool away from lifting a 14th European Cup. - APP

## Dozens of Israeli settlers storm Al Aqsa complex



OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Dozens of Israeli settlers have stormed the yards of Al Aqsa Mosque compound, protected by the heavy presence of Israeli forces deployed on the first day following the end of Eid al Fitr, which marks the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Israeli forces attacked Palestinians on Thursday at the Islam's third holiest site in occupied East Jerusalem. A crowd of Palestinians gathered in protest and scuffles broke out when the police went to arrest one of them. Police fired rubber-coated bullets and tear gas on Palestinians as some sheltered inside the mosque itself. The police could later be seen just inside an entrance to the mosque. The police said they responded to dozens of people who were shouting incitement and throwing stones, and that one police officer was lightly injured. But Palestinian witnesses said there was no sign of rock-throwing

initially. Some of those who sheltered inside the mosque began throwing stones when police started to enter the building. The witnesses spoke on condition of anonymity because of security concerns. Under informal arrangements known as the status quo, Jews are allowed to visit the site but not pray there. In recent years, they have visited in ever-increasing numbers with police escorts and many have discreetly prayed, angering the Palestinians as well as neighbouring Jordan, which is the custodian of the site. The Palestinians have long feared that Israel plans to eventually take over the site or partition it. Israel says it is committed to maintaining the status quo of the site, but carried out several rounds of attacks on Muslim worshippers during the month of Ramadan in April. Visits by mostly nationalist and religious Jews resumed on Thursday after

being paused for the last 10 days of Ramadan and the Eid al Fitr holiday. Thursday is also Israel's Independence Day and in recent days fringe groups had called on Jewish worshippers to celebrate by waving Israeli flags at the holy site. The calls were widely circulated by Palestinians on social media, along with calls to confront any such display. Hussein al Sheikh, a senior Palestinian official who serves as the main liaison between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, tweeted about the controversy, saying that raising the flag would show "outrageous disregard" for Palestinian feelings and mark the "continuation of extremist racist campaigns." Hamas warned on Wednesday that Israel was "playing with fire and dragging the region into an escalation for which the occupation bears full responsibility." Clashes in and around Al Aqsa last year ignited an 11-day Israeli war on Gaza. - APP

## Maradona's 'hand of God' jersey auctioned for \$9.3m

NEW YORK: The jersey that Argentina football legend Diego Maradona wore while scoring twice against England in the 1986 World Cup, including the infamous "hand of God" goal, was auctioned for \$9.3 million, a record for any item of sports memorabilia, Sotheby's said Wednesday. Seven bidders vied for the garment in an auction that began April 20 and ended Wednesday morning, Sotheby's said, without releasing the name of the buyer. "This historic shirt is a tangible reminder of an important moment not only in the history of sports, but in the history of the 20th century," Sotheby's head of streetwear and modern collectibles Brahm Wächter said in a statement after the sale. "This is arguably the most coveted football shirt to ever come to auction, and so it is fitting that it now holds

the auction record for any object of its kind," he said. The jersey had been owned by opposing midfielder Steve Hodge, who swapped his jersey with Maradona after England lost 2-1. Hodge, whose autobiography is titled "The man with Maradona's shirt," has for the past 20 years loaned the jersey to be on public display at the National Football Museum in Manchester. The quarter-final showdown became etched in football lore for Maradona's two goals – one notorious and one sublime – in Mexico City's seething Aztec Stadium. The first came shortly after half-time when Hodge, on the edge of the England penalty area, intercepted a pass and flicked the ball back towards goal. Maradona, running into the box, rose with England's goalkeeper Peter Shilton and punched the ball into the net. He later said the goal had been scored

"a little with the head of Maradona, a little with the hand of God." Soon after, Maradona left five English defenders in his wake before gliding past Shilton and slotting home for a strike that was voted "Goal of the Century" in a 2002 FIFA poll. Argentina went on to win the final and Maradona, who died from a heart attack in 2020, became worshipped in his home country. Maradona's daughter cast doubt on the sale earlier this month when she claimed that the shirt put up for auction had been the one her father wore in the goalless first half, not the second when he scored his two goals. "This former player thinks he has my dad's second-half jersey, but it's a mix-up. He has the one from the first half," his daughter Dalma said. Sotheby's insisted they had the right shirt, though. - APP

## Nadal wins on return from injury in Madrid

MADRID: Rafael Nadal enjoyed a winning return after a six-week injury break, opening his Madrid campaign with a 6-1, 7-6(7/4) success over Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic on Wednesday. The Spanish star had been sidelined with a rib injury since his Indian Wells final defeat in March but showed little sign of rust as he skipped into the third round. Nadal said his preparation for the tournament was "non-existent" due to his rib problem limiting his ability to train and was thrilled by how well he played against one of the most in-form players of the season. "Today I was able to play one hour, 55 minutes against an opponent that was playing really well in these last months, so a really good victory, a lot of value to it," said the 35-year-old Mallorcan. "It helps me a lot to reach my final goal, which is to recover my previous health and previous fitness. I'm very excited about it." The 22-year-old Kecmanovic entered the match carrying the second-highest tally of wins on tour this season – his 23 victories placing him just one behind Andrey Rublev,

Stefanos Tsitsipas and Carlos Alcaraz. Nadal, a three-time title winner in 2022, improved to 21-1 for the year and now plays Belgian qualifier David Goffin. After a fairly routine opening set and a brief rain delay, Nadal faced significant resistance from the world number 32, who was broken in game five of the second set but struck back immediately as he started to find his range.

forced a tie-break. The pair were neck and neck, gifting each other mini-breaks before Nadal finally secured the win in just under two hours with an ace. Second-seeded Alexander Zverev began his title defence with a hard-fought 4-6, 6-4, 6-4 win over former US Open champion Marin Cilic. The German is a two-time Madrid champion and now owns a 16-2 win-loss record at the Caja Magica. Fourth seed Tsitsipas beat French wildcard Lucas Pouille 6-3, 6-4, while Jannik Sinner and Felix Auger-Aliassime both won in straight sets. British ninth seed Cameron Norrie edged past John Isner 6-4, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4 to advance to a last-16 clash with teenage star Alcaraz, but fifth seed Casper Ruud lost in three sets to Dusan Lajovic. Earlier on centre court, Ons Jabeur marched into the women's semi-finals with a crushing 6-3, 6-2 win over former world number one Simona Halep. After avenging her Charleston final defeat to Belinda Bencic in the previous round, the Tunisian world number 10 reversed her result against Halep from Dubai three months ago, sweeping the Romanian aside in just 67 minutes.

The first ever Arab tennis player to crack the top 10, Jabeur is through to the second WTA 1000 semi-final of her career where she faces Russian Ekaterina Alexandrova. "Simona, it's never easy to play against her, she's a great champion, she was number one, a Grand Slam champion," said the 27-year-old Jabeur, who is now 2-2 against Halep in their head-to-head. "I was more aggressive this time, physically much better on the court. My drop shot helped me a lot today. I'm very happy with the attitude today, so hopefully we'll continue with this level." Halep drew first blood, inching ahead 2-1 but Jabeur scooped the next three games and sealed the set with a flashy point that ended with a forehand down-the-line winner. Jabeur continued to pepper Halep with her signature drop shot, earning two breaks in the second set en route to a convincing victory. Jessica Pegula, the 12th seed, eliminated Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo 6-4, 6-2. Her next opponent is Jil Teichmann, the Swiss who defeated Ukraine's Anhelina Kalinina 6-3, 6-4

## PTI rejects govt made commission

FROM PAGE 01

commission formed under independent judiciary which will have an open hearing. Fawad Chaudhry said that despite the coalition government's claims of Farah Khan – former PM Imran Khan's wife Bushra Bibi's close aide – being involved in corruption, "they have not been able to make a case against her." Addressing a press conference flanked by PTI's Farrukh Habib, Fawad replied to the allegations levelled by Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb – who said the alleged foreign conspiracy is to save Farah Khan – saying that the coalition government blames her because it has "nothing else to blame the PTI for".

He said: "Farah will address all allegations against her and will move forward accordingly." Regarding the performance of the incumbent government, he said that terrorist activities in Pakistan have increased by 24%. "Two-third members of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's government are released on bail," he said, adding that Pakistan's economy is currently running without a driving force.

Fawad highlighted that the premier is yet to appoint the energy minister, blaming them [the coalition government] for being involved in the trading of ministries. "The distribution of ministries in his [Shehbaz Sharif] family is being done on a monetary basis," he maintained. The PTI leader said that the conspiracy started with "absolutely not" and ended with the ouster of Imran Khan. Fawad apprised the journalists that PTI is holding public gatherings from May 6 to May 20, after which Imran Khan will announce the planned long-march. "Millions of people will come out to support Imran Khan in the fight for real freedom," he said.

The former minister also mentioned that a hearing on the case of 25 Punjab Assembly and 22 National Assembly dissident PTI members will be heard in the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) today (Friday). He further mentioned that the ECP has to decide within 30 days, saying that the whole crisis revolves around the case of dissident members. Fawad warned of the situation getting worse in case immediate elections are not held, however, he added that people shouldn't panic. Speaking on the occasion, Farrukh Habib said that the coalition government has adopted "slavery and deceived people everywhere." "They are guests for a few more days and will leave soon," he said.

## US condemns KU attack targeting...

FROM PAGE 01

asked to comment on the suicide attack targeting Chinese citizens. Ned Price said the US gives great importance to its relations with Pakistan. "When it comes to your question, what I'll say is that we value our bilateral relationship. We want to continue to work together in areas where we do have mutual interests with our Pakistani partners. That includes counterterrorism. That includes border security as well," the US State Department spokesperson added. According to the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD), the KU attack was a suicide blast carried out by a burqa-clad woman. The explosion occurred at 1:52pm outside the Confucius Institute – a Chinese language teaching centre at Karachi University. Following the blast, rescue and security agencies rushed to the location and cordoned off the areas, initiating rescue operations. The deceased Chinese nationals have been identified as the director of the Confucius Institute Huang Guiping, Ding Mupeng, Chen Sai, and their Pakistani driver, Khalid. Of the four people who sustained injuries, two have been identified as Chinese national Wang Yuqing and a security guard named Hamid. A banned outfit had claimed the responsibility for the attack. The security agencies have launched an operation to apprehend those involved in the blast but so far no major success has been achieved. The husband of the female attacker is still at large.



## Briefs

## Russia bans entry to Japan's PM, officials: ministry

MOSCOW: Russia said Wednesday it has banned entry to several dozen Japanese officials, including Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, after Tokyo joined international sanctions against Moscow over its military campaign in Ukraine. "The administration of F. Kishida launched an unprecedented anti-Russian campaign (and) allows unacceptable rhetoric against the Russian Federation, including slander and direct threats," the foreign ministry said in a statement. "It is echoed by public figures, experts, representatives of Japanese media, who are completely engaged by the attitudes of the West towards our country," the ministry added.

It accused Tokyo of taking "practical steps aimed at dismantling good neighbourly ties, damaging the Russian economy and the international prestige of the country". The ministry said it was "indefinitely" banning from Russia 63 Japanese citizens, including the prime minister, cabinet members, lawmakers, journalists and professors. Kishida retorted that it was "Russia that brought Japan-Russia relations to this point". "It is Russia who invited such situations by resorting to military steps," he told journalists accompanying him on a trip to Italy and the Vatican. Russia's "killing of innocent civilians is a significant violation of international humanitarian law," he said. "We cannot forgive this". - Agencies

## Hong Kong less free as Carrie Lam leaves office

HONG KONG: Hong Kong has emerged a more unequal city, its freedoms curtailed and international shine dulled after five years with Carrie Lam at the helm, analysts say, as her turbulent leadership draws to an end. Lam, Hong Kong's first woman leader, took office promising to heal divisions and tackle livelihood issues, especially a housing crisis. Her term was instead dominated by massive democracy protests and Beijing's subsequent crackdown, as well as a zero-Covid pandemic strategy that kept the city isolated while rivals reopened. She is on track to depart at the end of June with the lowest approval ratings of any leader since the handover from Britain. In her final policy address last October, Lam described Hong Kong as "much stronger than ever" after China intervened to ensure stability. Her government survived the mass protest movement, but many say she failed to deliver on life improvement pledges - which even China's leadership says are at the heart of the city's "deep-rooted social conflicts".

Last year, 1.65 million Hong Kongers - nearly one in four - were living below the government's official poverty line, which for a one-person household means HK\$4,400 (\$560) a month. - Agencies

## Girod'Italia 'heroes' ready for Budapest citadel assault

BUDAPEST: The Girod'Italia peloton will race out of Heroes' Square in Budapest on Friday before switching to Sicily next week for a mountainous 21-stage adventure that culminates in a time-trial showdown in Verona on May 29.

Starting with three days of scenic rides in Hungary with a hilltop citadel finish on day one, the battle for the leader's pink jersey will rage across 3,446km of Italy's peaks and plains with often decisive changeable weather conditions to contend with. Swashbuckling Dutch rider Mathieu van der Poel makes his Giro debut and is tipped to upset the sprint pack, led by British ace Mark Cavendish, to don the jersey first after stage one. Hungary had been scheduled to host the start of the Giro in 2020 but that year's race was postponed until October due to the pandemic and held entirely within Italy. - Agencies

## Romania Black Sea port Ukrainian export hub

Before the war, Ukraine exported 4.5 million tonnes of agricultural produce per month through its ports - 12 percent of the world's wheat, 15 percent of its corn and 50 percent of its sunflower oil.

## DNA

CONSTANTA: Like a giant elephant trunk, a huge hose sweeps above the hold of a ship in Romania's Black Sea port of Constanta, spilling tons of corn into the vessel before it sets sail. Russia's blockade of Ukraine's seaports has forced the country's exporters to look for alternatives to move their precious cargo.

So now the country's grain is loaded onto trains, lorries or barges in the small Danube ports of Reni and Izmail in the southwest, for transport to the Romanian port. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has transformed Constanta

into a vital maritime export hub for Ukraine's crops. Before the war, Ukraine exported 4.5 million tonnes of agricultural produce per month through its ports - 12 percent of the world's wheat, 15 percent of its corn and 50 percent of its sunflower oil. "We need to make sure the grain gets to consumers' tables without delay to avoid the risk of famine," said Viorel Panait, chief executive of Convex, which handles Constanta's bulk raw materials. "We hope to accelerate the pace... because, given the unfortunate situation that our Ukrainian neighbours are going through, we must help them as much as we

can," he told AFP. Neighbouring Bulgaria said this week it was willing to help export Ukrainian grain from its Black Sea port of Varna - and is getting to work upgrading its infrastructure. In the meantime, Constanta is moving the cargo as fast as it can. The Lady Dimine, the ship being loaded with corn, is the second grain vessel since last week to moor at Pier 80, bound for Portugal once loaded. The first ship, loaded with 70,000 tonnes of Ukrainian corn, left Constanta last Friday, and a third is scheduled in six days. That first ship, carrying a 70,000-ton cargo, took 49 trains or barges to fill up, said Panait.

Loading such vessels in a port that was not properly equipped would mean thousands of trucks clogging up the roads, he added. Even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Constanta had overtaken France's Le Havre last year to become Europe's hub for grain exports, said the port's director, Florin Goidea. Now, he said: "Our goal is to ship the goods as quickly as possible and thus support the Ukrainian economy." His office offered a breathtaking view of the work at the docks, bristling with cranes and ship loaders. "The war in Ukraine is a challenge but also an opportunity," Goidea said. To

meet that challenge, Romania's government has come up with two projects to unblock road traffic and facilitate the flow of cargo to the port. First, it plans by the end of the year to have fixed up 95 railway lines dating back to the communist era, blocked for years by hundreds of rusting wagons. The 200-million-lei (40 million euros) project should allow Constanta to match or even beat the record of 67.5 million tonnes of goods in transit recorded in 2021, said Goidea. The transport ministry is also seeking bids for work to re-open a five-kilometre (three-mile) railway line, more than 200 kilometres to the north of

Constanta. That line would connect Giurgiulesti in Moldova - wedged between Romania and Ukraine - to Galati on the Danube, in eastern Romania. That short crossover is crucial, as they share the same railway track gauge used in the former Soviet Union, making it easier to transport goods.

The renovation of the track is planned for this summer. At Constanta meanwhile, traffic in the other direction has stalled. Dozens of wind turbine parts that had been bound for Ukraine lie abandoned along one of the congested roads. "There is no one left to send them to," said a port employee.

## Over 300 rescued from Mariupol

KYIV: Over 300 Ukrainians were evacuated from the battered city of Mariupol on Wednesday as President Volodymyr Zelensky asked the UN to help to rescue the remaining wounded trapped underneath the giant Azovstal steel plant. Speaking to the nation in his usual evening address, Zelensky said 344 people were evacuated from Mariupol and nearby areas and headed northward for the city of Zaporizhzhia, which is controlled by Kyiv. But earlier in the day, he also pleaded with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to help rescue the wounded who are still sheltering at the plant.

"The lives of the people who remain there are in danger," Zelensky told Guterres by phone. In a statement, the Red Cross said it was "relieved that more lives have been spared" and called for renewed efforts to continue evacuations from the region "in light of the immense suffering of the civilians."

Meanwhile, fierce battles with Russian troops continued to rage at the Azovstal plant, where Ukrainian soldiers had been holed up for weeks. Moscow, which has denied any storming of the plant was taking place, said its forces would cease fire at the plant to open a humanitarian corridor for civilians for three days beginning Thursday. "The Russian armed forces will from 8 am to 6 pm (0500 GMT to 1500 GMT) on May 5, 6 and 7 open a humanitarian corridor from the territory of the Azovstal metallurgical plant to evacuate civilians," the defence ministry said Wednesday. - Agencies

## Five things to know about Northern Ireland

LONDON: A win for pro-Irish nationalist party Sinn Fein in elections on Thursday for the Northern Ireland Assembly would be a first in the province's history. The whole of Ireland came under British rule through the 1801 Act for the Union of Great Britain and Ireland. Republicans led by Sinn Fein declared independence in 1916 and the Irish Republican Army mounted a guerrilla campaign against British troops between 1919 and 1921. The Anglo-Irish Treaty established the Irish Free State, an independent dominion of the British crown with full self-government rights. It also created Northern Ireland under British rule, with a Protestant-majority parliament in Belfast. In 1968, a civil rights movement emerged in the north as the Catholic minority spoke out against inequality and discrimination by the Protestant establishment. Resentment spilled over into serious unrest and three decades of violence between pro-British and pro-Irish paramilitary groups that left more than 3,500 dead. British troops were deployed in 1969 to maintain order and protect Catholic communities but the army came to be seen as an extension of Protestant rule. - Agencies

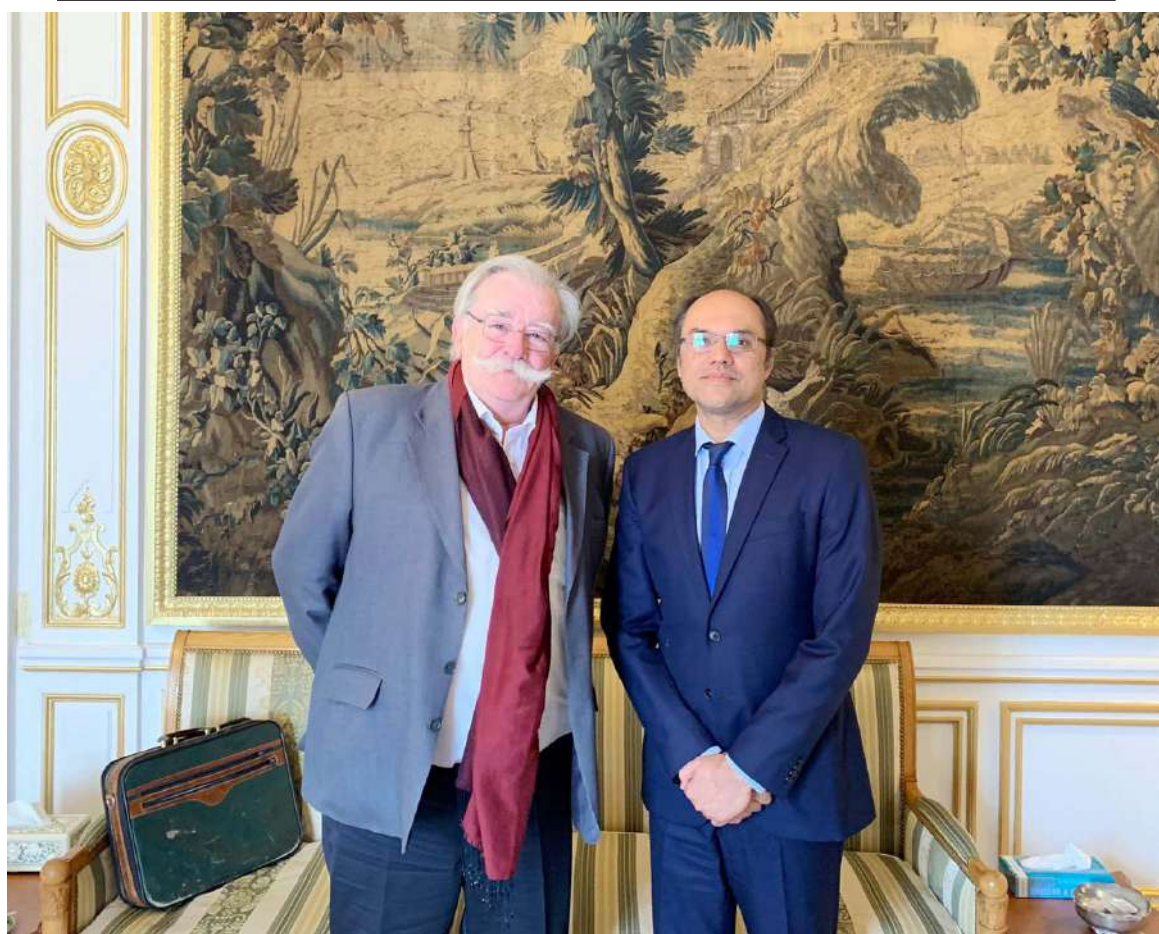
## Russia expels Danish diplomats

MOSCOW: Russia's foreign ministry on Thursday said it had declared seven employees of the Danish embassy in Moscow 'persona non grata' in response to a similar move by Copenhagen last month, with Moscow also objecting to Denmark's military assistance to Ukraine. The ministry said Denmark's openly anti-Russian policy was seriously damaging bilateral relations and that Russia reserved the right to take additional steps in response. Denmark's foreign ministry confirmed in an emailed statement it had been informed that four diplomats and three other employees at its embassy in Moscow would be expelled. "It is a completely unjustified and deeply problematic decision, which undermines that Russia no longer wants real dialogue and diplomacy," Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod said. In line with steps taken by other European Union countries, Denmark a month ago expelled 15 Russian employees at the embassy in Copenhagen, following reports of mass graves being found and of civilian killings in the Ukrainian town of Bucha. - Agencies

## Pakistani youth to collaborate with Chinese youth

BEIJING: Pakistani students studying in Chinese universities sharing their views on China's Youth Day, said they are committed to working with the Chinese youth and willing to learn in different fields. According to Gwadar Pro, Muhammad Humayun Asghar, a Pakistani student in Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT), said that Youngblood always wants to learn many things with an open mind. He is willing to learn hard work, passion, and Chinese culture from the Chinese youth. "I hope all of us together can do something great for the world and for the place where we live", he mentioned. Muhammad Rizwan Khan, a PhD student from Institute of Physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences said that Youth Day is significant for everyone as the majority of today's population is youth.

He further said that the group of people with an age group between 15 and 35 is thought to be the future of every country. "If youth are dynamic, passionate, hardworking and ready to face the challenges of the future, it can be safely predicted that the future of that country is bright," he added. "After spending a couple of years and working with this part of youth I can generalize that the youth of China are really passionate, hardworking, dynamic and well aware of their responsibilities as well. They have knowledge of their past and at the same time they care about their future and the future of mankind", he stated. He further said, "being a Pakistani, I feel blessed to have many Chinese friends, who taught me so many research skills and motivated me during these last couple of years." Sumra Asghar, a PhD student in Agriculture University in Beijing, said that the young Chinese are very focused and hardworking, passionate and helpful. "China becomes one of the most advanced countries in the field of plant biotechnology and 70% of the publications are coming from the Chinese research institutes and Chinese universities as compared with the rest of the world", she mentioned. - DNA



PARIS: Professor Georges Lefeuve, a renowned French anthropologist, who has done years of research on the Kalash people in Pakistan, met Cd'A of Pakistan in France Muhammad Amjad Aziz Qazi. They discussed possibilities of sharing his research with institutes in Pakistan. - DNA

## Pakistan urges UN to counter Islamophobia



## DNA

NEW YORK: Pakistan has called on the United Nations to take steps to counter the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia which has emerged as a new form of racism, characterized by hate speech, discrimination and violence against Muslims. "Islamophobia is a reality," Pakistani delegate Mariam Shaikh told the Committee on Information, a subsidiary body of the

UN General Assembly, on Wednesday. Ms. Shaikh, who is the press counselor at Pakistan Mission to UN, pointed out that Islamophobia's manifestations - hate speech, discrimination, and violence against Muslims - are proliferating in several parts of the world, constituting "grave violations" of Muslims individuals and communities' human rights and religious freedoms. In this regard, she urged the Department of Global Communication (DGC) to raise awareness of the phenome-

non and to promote messages of tolerance, peaceful coexistence as well as interfaith and cultural harmony among all religions, races and nations. A couple of months ago, the 193-member Assembly unanimously adopted a Pakistan-sponsored resolution that proclaimed March 15 as International Day to Combat Islamophobia, a move aimed at promoting a culture of tolerance ad peace globally. In her remarks, the Pakistani delegate also said that in an era where "fake news" travels faster than the truth, it is important to discern the ways in which information can be misunderstood. She described General Assembly resolution 76/227 as the path to addressing disinformation, noting that some countries, driven by the ambition to diplomatically isolate others, have compromised their own credibility, making the issue of fake news and disinformation warranting attention by the United Nations. "The disinformation operations via cyber-melding did not stop after EU Disinfo Lab's groundbreaking revelations and comprehensive evidence of targeting the UN bodies, its member states, core institutions and core values," Ms. Shaikh said.

## Blinken tests positive for Covid, to work remotely

WASHINGTON: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken tested positive Wednesday for Covid-19 and will shift to a virtual work schedule, the State Department said. "The Secretary is fully vaccinated and boosted against the virus and is experiencing only mild symptoms," the department said in a statement. Spokesman Ned Price said Blinken would no longer deliver a long-awaited speech on China policy scheduled for Thursday. "He looks forward to returning to the department and travels as soon as possible," the statement said. Blinken has not seen President Joe Biden in person for several days and is not considered a close contact, the State Department and White House said. Blinken earlier Wednesday met with Swedish Prime Minister Ann Linde at the State Department. Blinken, who had tested negative a day before, took another test as he felt symptoms after meeting Linde, the State Department said. Price said that all close contacts were being notified. Blinken also met Tuesday with Mexican Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard and delivered a speech at the State Department on Latin America policy. Blinken was among guests who packed into a Washington hotel on Saturday evening for the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner. Trevor Noah, the comedian who introduced Biden, joked about the gala dinner being a "super-spreader" event. - Agencies

## 'Stories of CPEC's Pioneer'

## DNA

BEIJING: There is a saying 'Bridges the gap and get things done' this is story of CPEC's Pioneer 32-year-old Sufyan Ansar Warraich who works as the Administrative Commissioner in Shanghai Electric Thar Coal Block-1 Power Generation Company (PVT) Ltd. He works with his teammates to take care of around 180 employees, like their living, their office, their food, their entry, their exit... Together with his coworkers, Warraich devotes himself to the construction of Thar Coal Block-1 Power Plant, a combined coalmine and coal-powered energy generation project under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) located in Islamkot, Tharparkar District, Sindh, Pakistan. The project cannot be built without excellent management and hardworking front-line Chinese and Pakistani staff, but it also needs bridges like Warraich to narrow the gap. Joined the company in December 2020, Warraich mainly cares about the administration, public relations and social responsibility work of the site.

His life is filled with cultural differences, language differences and arrangement differences, but he loves to take on such challenges. As per Liu Chaoqun, Schedule Manager of the company, Warraich once studied at Harbin Engineering University, which is located in Harbin, the Ice City of China. This experience made Warraich know Chinese culture well and helped him take good care of both Pakistani and Chinese employees. "You can always count on Sufyan!" Liu Chaoqun said. According to the multinational corporation Shanghai Electric, it hires both Pakistani and Chinese workers. There are about 5,000 employees working at the site of Thar Coal Block-1 Power Plant, among which a large amount are Muslims. "I work on both sides - for the Chinese site and the Pakistani side," Warraich tries his best to bridge different cultures. For example, the holy month of Ramadan of 2022 began on April 3. Muslims will fast during Ramadan, which means waking up before dawn to eat, hydrate and pray. Once the sun rises, Muslims abstain from food and drink, including

water, until sunset. However, the April of Thar Desert is as hot as mid-summer. High temperatures are baking the site. "Scarcely a drop of rain falls here," Liu Chaoqun told the reporter, adding that it would be torture for fasting people to work as usual in such a scorching heat. Therefore, Warraich communicated with the management and proposed setting more suitable working hours for Pakistani staff during Ramadan. "My job is to keep every employee working properly in a cozy environment from a to z. I need to keep them focused on their jobs," Warraich said. The proposal was soon recognized by the company and Pakistani workers felt the company's respect for their religion and culture. On top of that, Warraich is also a bridge between the company and locals living near the project site. "Warraich once investigated the living conditions and needs of villagers around the site, and coordinated the company to carry out various CSR donations for them," recalled Jiang Zedong, Maintenance Manager of Production Preparation Department.

STORIES OF CPEC'S PIONEER  
SUFYAN ANSAR  
WARRAICH  
ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSIONER OF  
SHANGHAI ELECTRIC THAR COAL BLOCK-1  
POWER GENERATION COMPANY (PVT) LTD.



## Briefs

### Pak values fraternal ties with Bahrain: PM Shahbaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday held a telephone call with Bahrain King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa to convey greetings on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. The Prime Minister also conveyed his best wishes for the continued progress and prosperity of the brotherly people of Bahrain. He reiterated that Pakistan values its fraternal ties with Bahrain and expressed his resolve to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. Shehbaz Sharif appreciated the measures taken by Bahrain to look after the Pakistani diaspora during the COVID-19 pandemic. While reciprocating the Prime Minister's Eid greetings and warm sentiments for the people of Bahrain, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa felicitated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on his recent election and assumption of office. Reaffirming Bahrain's commitment to broaden and deepen bilateral cooperation with Pakistan, His Majesty said he looks forward to working closely with the Prime Minister to advance this objective.

### FM lauds Turkey for support on Kashmir

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari received a telephone call from Turkish counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, who felicitated him on assuming office as Foreign Minister of Pakistan. The Turkish Foreign Minister also congratulated Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Eid-ul-Fitr. They also discussed further strengthening of close fraternal cooperation between the two countries. Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari thanked his counterpart Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu for Turkey's support for Pakistan's stance on Kashmir issue. They agreed to celebrate the completion of 75 years of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

### PM, UAE delegation discuss, trade ties

ISLAMABAD: In follow up of recent visit of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to the United Arab Emirates, a high level economic delegation of UAE visited Pakistan on Tuesday to discuss economic and trade relations. The Prime Minister while talking to the delegation said that the Government of Pakistan attached highest priority to its brotherly relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and was desirous to strengthen the relations to the next level especially on the economic front. This high-level visit during the Eid holidays exhibited the keenness of the Government of UAE to invest in our country. - APP

# Russian ceasefire begins at besieged steel plant

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba hit back that EU countries blocking an oil embargo would be "complicit" in Russia's crimes in Ukraine

AGENCIES

ZAPORIZHZHIA: A Russian-announced ceasefire was due to begin Thursday at the besieged steel plant in the devastated Ukrainian city of Mariupol, to allow civilians to flee even as its defenders vowed to fight to the end. The three-day halt in Russia's attack on the Azovstal steelworks was announced as EU member states debated a proposed ban on Russian oil, the bloc's toughest move yet over Moscow's invasion of its neighbour. The EU also pledged to "significantly increase" support for Ukrainian neighbour Moldova, where a series of attacks in a Russia-backed separatist region has sparked fears a war that has killed thousands could spread more than two months after it began. European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen on Wednesday said the bloc would "phase out Russian supply of crude oil within six months and refined products by the end of the year", a move that would still not touch its huge gas exports. But within hours, Hungary - whose populist leader Viktor Orban is one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's few EU partners - said it could not support the plan "in this form", as it would "completely destroy" the

## Belarus trying to end Ukraine war: Lukashenko

WEB DESK

MINSK: Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko says he did not expect Russia's offensive in Ukraine to last so long and claimed he is doing "everything" to stop the more than two-month-long war. Lukashenko defended Russia's self-described "special military operation" on Thursday and accused Kyiv of "provoking" Moscow but said he had not

security of its energy supply. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba hit back that EU countries blocking an oil embargo would be "complicit" in Russia's crimes in Ukraine. Ukraine's allies have sent money and, increasingly, heavy weapons to Kyiv to help it defend itself in a war US President Joe Biden has framed as a historic battle for democracy. Biden said Wednesday he was "open" to imposing more sanctions on Rus-

sia and would be discussing measures with allies from the Group of Seven democracies in the coming days. Intelligence provided by the US has helped Ukrainian military target "many" of the approximately dozen Russian generals who have been killed in the war so far, the New York Times reported on Wednesday. The US National Security Council slammed the assertion that the United

States was helping Ukraine kill Russian generals as "irresponsible," with a spokesperson saying US intelligence was aimed at helping "Ukrainians defend their country... we do not provide intelligence with the intent to kill Russian generals." Despite severe blows to its economy and the thwarting of its early war goals, Russia continues to steadily pound away at Ukraine's embattled eastern defences.

thought the former's campaign would "drag on this way". "But I am not immersed in this problem enough to say whether it goes according to plan, like the Russians say, or like I feel it. I want to stress one more time, I feel like this operation has dragged on," Lukashenko told The Associated Press news agency. He insisted that Belarus, which shares a border with Ukraine and is a staunch ally of Moscow, is pushing for a peace agreement between the two sides. "We categorically do not accept any war. We have done and are doing everything now so that there isn't a war. Thanks to yours truly, me that is, negotiations between Ukraine and Russia have begun," Lukashenko said. "But why is Ukraine, on whose territory a war in effect is ongoing... why is Ukraine not interested in these negotiations?" Lukashenko also said it would be "unacceptable" to use nuclear weapons but added he could not say if Russia has such plans. "Not only is the use of nuclear weapons unacceptable because it's right next to us - we are not across the ocean like the United States.

Japan's state minister of defence Makoto Oniki confirmed the launch and the missile's trajectory, saying it had landed "outside of Japan's exclusive economic zone". North Korea's "repeated launches of ballistic missiles threaten peace and safety of our nation, the region and the international community," Oniki said. Pyongyang has conducted 14 weapons tests since January, including firing an intercontinental ballistic missile at full-range for the first time since 2017. Last week, while overseeing a huge military parade, North Korean leader Kim vowed to develop his nuclear forces "at the fastest possible speed" and warned of possible "pre-emptive" strikes. Meanwhile, satellite imagery indicates he may soon resume nuclear testing. Analysts said Kim's messaging on his nuclear weapons, plus the recent test, could be seen as a signal to President-elect Yoon, who has threatened a pre-emptive strike on Pyongyang. "It could be a warning message to... Yoon," said Hong Min of the Korea Institute for National Unification. - APP



HYDERABAD: A couple enjoying camel ride on the 3rd day of Eid-ul-Fitr at River Indus. - APP

## PM, Saudi Crown Prince reaffirm desire to broaden ties

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman Tuesday reaffirmed their desire to closely work together for further deepening and broadening bilateral relations to the mutual benefit of the people of the two brotherly countries. The Prime Minister made a telephone call to Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister and Defense Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to extend his best wishes and greetings on the auspicious occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. The Prime Minister conveyed his warm wishes and prayers as well as Eid greetings for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and the brotherly people of Saudi Arabia. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded by the Saudi leadership

and the government during his recent visit to the Kingdom on 28-30 April 2022. Recalling his interaction with the Crown Prince during the visit, the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen the historic fraternal ties with Saudi Arabia and further elevate the strategic relationship between the two countries in all spheres. The Prime Minister also underscored his firm resolve to implement the decisions taken during his recent meeting with the Crown Prince. His Royal Highness the Crown Prince warmly reciprocated Prime Minister's Eid greetings and conveyed greetings and best wishes for the people of Pakistan. Reaffirming his desire to closely work together for augmenting and diversifying bilateral cooperation, the Crown Prince underlined his resolve to follow through on the understandings reached during the PM recent visit to Saudi Arabia. - DNA



## North Korea fires ballistic missile in latest show of force

SEOUL: North Korea fired a ballistic missile Wednesday, Seoul said, a week after Kim Jong Un vowed to boost Pyongyang's nuclear arsenal and just days before the South inaugurates a new, hawkish president. North Korea fired the ballistic missile at 12:03 pm (0303 GMT), Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said, likely from the Sunan Airfield near Pyongyang, the site of previous recent ICBM tests. The missile flew 470 kilometers (300 miles) and reached an altitude of 780 kilometers, the JCS said, adding it was a "blatant violation of UN Security Council resolutions". The Wednesday test comes days before the May 10 inauguration of South Korea's President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol, who has vowed to take a hard line with North Korea and ramp up security cooperation with the United States after years of failed diplomacy.

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# DISCOVER PAKISTAN

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## Millions in Beijing urged to work from home

BEIJING: The streets of Beijing's business district were deserted on Thursday as the government called for people to return to work remotely, with scores of subway stations shut after a national holiday muted by coronavirus curbs. Chinese authorities have stuck to their zero-COVID policy of lockdowns and mass testing as they battle the biggest outbreak since the early days of the pandemic, with entire neighbourhoods in the capital sealed over handfolds of infections. Beijing reported 50 local cases on Thursday, a day after it said people in Chaoyang, its most populous district, should work from home. Those among the district's 3.5 million residents who needed to visit their offices were encouraged to drive themselves and avoid gatherings. At least one other Beijing district has also encouraged residents to work

from home, while dozens of subway stations across the capital remained closed. Open restaurants offer only takeaway. But Feng Yinhao, a massage parlour employee in Chaoyang district, said Beijing was "still normal" compared to the country's largest city, Shanghai. Authorities have been treading cautiously since an extended lockdown in the southern finance hub led to food shortages and public anger. "Residents can accept the situation now," Zhan Jun, a man living in Chaoyang, told AFP. But "if things are like in Shanghai... if it's too severe, things will sound different." Shanghai - epicentre of the latest outbreak - reported more than 4,600 mostly asymptomatic infections on Thursday and 13 more deaths. The call to work from home followed an unusually quiet Labour Day holiday, with the capital stepping up COVID

testing requirements for entering public spaces, discouraging travel and shutting down gyms. Domestic tourism revenue from the five-day break was down by more than 40 per cent from a year ago, according to official data. Dozens of Chinese cities were implementing full or partial lockdowns, or measures restricting mobility as of May 3, analysts from Nomura said. The economic impact of the stringent measures has started to weigh, with independent data on Thursday showing that activity in China's services sector slumped in April to its second-lowest level on record. Meanwhile, the case of a Beijing COVID patient who infected dozens of others via the city's public toilets sparked amusement on social media - with Weibo users sharing photos of one public restroom that now appeared to be requiring proof of a recent COVID test to enter. - Agencies

## Punjab CM orders special security for Chinese nationals

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday afternoon ordered special security for the Chinese people living or working in the province, according to Gwadar Pro. He was chairing a meeting at chief minister's office here in which arrangements were made to ensure that the life and property of the masses on Eidul Fitr also came under consideration. The meeting reviewed law and order situation in the province and security arrangements of foreigners especially the Chinese people. The special arrangements come after three Chinese nationals and a Pakistani were killed in a suicide attack in Karachi recently. The CM directed to ensure foolproof security on the moon night and Eid congregations and mobilize district law and order committees. He urged the public representatives to play their proactive role for the betterment of law and order in their respective districts and no stone should be left unturned for ensuring the security of the masses. He resolved that no compromise would be made on the steps being taken for ensuring the safety and security of the masses. Police officers gave him a briefing on the arrangements being made for the security of the people across the province. Parliamentarians Rana Maqbool Ahmad, Awais Leghari, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, Jahangir Khanzada, Zeeshan Rafique, Atta Taran and senior officials concerned attended the meeting physically or through video links.