



Tuesday, June 14, 2022

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Islamabad POST

Macron wins majority in first round of the Legislative Elections

Detailed News On Page-07

Govt providing Rs 3bn subsidy on Ghee

Detailed News On Page-03


Medvedev dethrones Djokovic

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Canada PM tests positive for COVID

NEWS DESK

OTTAWA: Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Monday that he had tested positive for COVID-19, adding that he was feeling fine since he was vaccinated. Last week, Trudeau met U.S. President Joe Biden and attended the Summit of the Americas in California, where leaders from the region gathered to discuss issues impacting those countries, including immigration. "I've tested positive for COVID-19. I'll be following public health guidelines and isolating."

UN rights chief won't seek second term

DNA

NEW YORK: High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet told the UN-backed Human Rights Council on Monday that she would not seek a second four-year term for the position she has held since 2018. The 70-year-old former president of Chile's current term ends on August 31. "As my term as High Commissioner draws to a close, this Council's milestone fiftieth session will be the last which I brief," she said at the opening of the UN Human Rights Council's 50th annual meeting, which runs until July 8.

Turkish envoy calls on Naval chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Ehsan Mustafa Yurdakul paid farewell call on Naval Chief Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad on Monday. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest including ways to enhance maritime co-op between the two countries were discussed. The Naval Chief commended the services of the Turkish Ambassador in strengthening cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Rupee breaks all records against dollar

With a fresh decline of Rs1.51 (or 0.74%), the local currency closed at Rs203.86 against the US dollar in the interbank market

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistani rupee on Monday continued its downward slide against the US dollar as it broke all previous records by plunging to an all-time low of 203.86 in the interbank market. With a fresh decline of Rs1.51 (or 0.74%), the local currency closed at Rs203.86 against the greenback in the interbank market, surpassing its previous record low of Rs202.83 recorded on June 7. The local currency continued its downward streak in line with the predictions of the analysts who fear high dollar demand for import payments ahead of fiscal year-end would keep the rupee under pressure. The rupee dived as a relentless surge in global crude oil prices raised concerns about a sustained rise in imported inflation and widening current account deficit, while fast-depleting foreign exchange reserves were also hurt. Since the beginning of this fiscal year (July 1, 2021) to date, the rupee has collectively dropped by a massive 29.40% (or Rs46.32) compared to the previous fiscal year's close at Rs157.54.

Continued on Page 06

Hammad sees doubling of inflation rate

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Focal Person for Economic Affairs Hammad Azhar warned that Pakistan would soon see a doubling of the inflation rate due to wrong policies of the imported government. He said that the imported government headed Pakistan on the opposition direction due to which nothing could be expected from the current ruling junta. Hammad stated that the government was making tall claims to bring to an end the load shedding; but controlling the power outages was beyond their capacity and understanding.

Continued on Page 06

'PML-N, ECP plotting to rig next elections'

Former premier also hints at possibility of snap polls; slams 'imported govt' for inflation

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and PTI Chairman Imran Khan has accused the ruling PML-N and the top electoral watchdog of working in cahoots to rig the next general elections. "The ECP [Election Commission of Pakistan] takes orders from Hamza Shehbaz and Maryam Nawaz... they are planning to rig the next elections," he said while addressing the farmers' convention in Islamabad on Monday. The PTI chief has time and again accused the ECP and its chief of being the henchman of the PML-N and sought

Continued on Page 06

JUI Sherani group aligns with PTI

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Sherani group (JUI) on Monday announced political and religious alliance with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). According to sources, Head of JUI Sherani Group Maulana Khan Sherani along with a 25-member delegation met PTI Chairman

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Sherani group (JUI) leader Maulana Khan Sherani meets PTI Chairman Imran Khan. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi calls on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. – DNA

FM Bilawal to visit Iran

ALI FURQAN

ISLAMABAD: At the invitation of Foreign Minister Dr. Amir Abdullahian, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will undertake his first official visit to Iran on 14-15 June 2022. During the visit, the Foreign Minister will hold detailed exchange of views with his Iranian counterpart on all areas of mutual interest. He will also call on the Honorable President of Iran and meet other dignitaries. The Foreign Minister will visit Mashhad on 15 June 2022. During the delegation-level talks, the two sides will review all facets of bilateral relations, including trade and economic ties, electricity supply from Iran, border sustenance markets, road and rail connectivity, and facilitation of Zaireen. They will also review regional security situation with particular focus on developments in Afghanistan and South Asia as well as combating Islamophobia.

Continued on Page 06

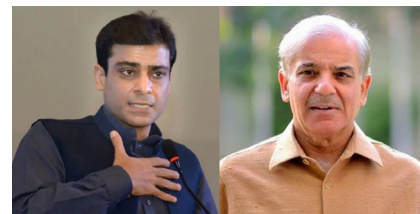
All bridges to key Ukraine city destroyed

WEB DESK

KYIV: The battle for Severodonetsk has been as intense as any fight in the Donbas region, but it seems Russia is now on the cusp of taking the city. The regional Ukrainian governor, Serhiy Haidai, warned of an imminent symbolic and strategic loss, saying Severodonetsk will soon be cut off from the rest of the country if the Russians destroy its last remaining bridge. It was in this fierce frontline fight that British ex-soldier Jordan Gatley was shot dead, his family revealed at the weekend.

No evidence against PM, CM Hamza: Court

Court issues written order for confirming their pre-arrest bail



STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: A special court in the city said Monday that "no evidence of corruption, misuse of authority, and bribery" was so far found on record against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his son, Chief Minister Punjab Hamza Shahbaz, in the Rs16 billion money laundering case. In a written order for confirming their pre-arrest bail, the higher court said the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) wanted to arrest PM Shehbaz and CM Hamza after they secured bails in the National Accountability Bureau's

Continued on Page 06

'Gang of corrupts' to paralyze Pak economy: Farrukh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Secretary Information Farrukh Habib said that the 'gang of corrupts' was hell-bent to paralyze Pakistan economically and to make life of all and sundry a hell through flawed economic policies and wrong priorities. Reacting to Information Minister Maryam Aurangzeb's press conference, Farrukh Habib said that the imported government badly exposed during a short span of two months, as the gang of corrupts snatched all facilities from the people. He said that the imported government created a cost-of-living crisis in the country,

Continued on Page 06

FATF meeting to decide Pakistan fate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A crucial meeting of the global financial tracking body, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is scheduled to meet later this week in Berlin, Germany, where Pakistan will hope it is finally taken off the gray list. Sources said that the four-day plenary moot is expected to take place from June 14 and last until June 17. Pakistan is expected to be represented by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar and she will lead discussions on June 15 and 16. The meeting, Islamabad hopes, will see it removed from

the 'gray list' which comes with a host of financial restrictions. Pakistan was placed on the list in 2008. It was then removed in 2009 before being put under close monitoring between 2012 and 2015. It was re-added to the list for deficiencies in its alleged counter-terror financing and anti-money laundering regimes. By 2018, Pakistan had fulfilled 26 of the 27 conditions set out by FATF. In 2021, the government certified that it had met six conditions out of the seven outlined under the action plan. So far, Pakistan has met 32 conditions out of 34 under two obligations.

Continued on Page 06

Inside...

Lawmakers in NA condemn derogatory remarks by BJP leaders – Page 02

COMSTECH launches capacity building program for Yemen – Page 03

President asks taxpayers to approach FTO for justice – Page 04

Covid-19 vaccination in Pakistan: Impact and perspective for the future – Page 05

Daniil Medvedev dethrones Djokovic as world number one – Page 06

Macron wins razor-thin majority in 1st round – Page 07

CM happy with budget, terms it poor friendly – Page 08

BJP govt vandalizing Muslim activists' homes

The demolition came after days of protests by India's Muslims against the anti-Islam remarks by two members of PM Modi's BJP earlier this month, triggering a diplomatic backlash against New Delhi

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: A young Muslim activist whose house was bulldozed by the authorities in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh says it was an "act of vendetta" by the government for the protests over comments made against Prophet Muhammad by officials of the country's right-wing governing party. Surrounded by a large posse of police in riot gear, authorities in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj city on Sunday brought in earthmovers to demolish Aftreen Fatima's house as dozens of media people recorded the demolition. Within hours, the two-storey building was reduced to rubble and its belongings – furniture, books and photographs – thrown on an empty plot next to the house. Among them was a poster that said: "When injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty." The demolition came after days of protests by India's Muslims against the anti-Islam remarks by two members of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) earlier this month, triggering a diplomatic backlash against New Delhi. As several Muslim nations demanded an apology from the In-

PM condemns Indian govt atrocities against Muslims

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said India has unleashed its "brute and oppressive state apparatus to browbeat Indian Muslims into submission". In a tweet on Monday, the premier said the whole plan is to further marginalise Muslims politically, economically, and culturally. The minister said the reality of India's "democratic face" is before the world to see. Last week, Shehbaz had asked for a resolution by the National Assembly in response to Islamophobic remarks made by the leaders of India's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) drawing widespread condemnation. In a tweet on Saturday, the premier asked the NA speaker to allow

the lower house to hold a discussion on the Islamophobic comments on Monday. "We strongly condemn the twaddle by the BJP leader," he had said on Twitter. Earlier this month, Senate had passed a unanimous resolution against these remarks. PPP Senator Saleem Mandviwalla had tabled the resolution. The Senate had expressed its strong commitment to defending the dignity of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) at national, regional, and international fora. Like Pakistan, the rest of the Muslim world also condemned India and sought action against the individuals who made such blasphemous comments. Furthermore, the controversy has strained India's relationship with the Gulf countries, which are outraged by the insulting remarks. Some Arab countries have called for a boycott of Indian products.

dian government, the Muslims in India saw the remarks by the BJP's Nupur Sharma and former Delhi media cell head Naveen Kumar Jindal as yet another instance of the right wing's hate speech against the minority community which has spiked since Modi came to power in 2014. As global outrage grew, the BJP suspended Sharma and expelled Jindal, saying their comments do not reflect the party's views and asking its spokespeople to be "extremely cautious" on religious matters while speaking on news channels. Meanwhile, police in the Indian capital filed cases against the two and others for "inciting hatred" and other charges. But Muslim groups said the moves were not enough and held large protests in several cities after the congregational prayers on Friday, demanding the arrest of the duo. Two teenagers were killed and dozens wounded in the protests. Hundreds of protesters were arrested. The protests in Prayagraj – earlier known as Allahabad – on Friday following the Muslim congregational prayers turned violent at some places, with police firing tear gas and baton-charging as demonstrators marched and allegedly tried to burn a police vehicle.

Lawmakers in NA condemn derogatory remarks by BJP leaders

ISLAMABAD: The lawmakers in the National Assembly here on Monday strongly condemned the derogatory remarks uttered by India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders against Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH). Participating in the discussion on the sanctity of Allah Almighty's last Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Rasool Allah Khatmun-Nabbiyyin (SAWW), MNA Syed Imran Ahmad Shah termed the derogatory remarks as an unfortunate incident and asked the Muslim community across the country to show unity on this issue. He said that Indian leaders had hurt the sentiments of about 1.5 billion Muslims living across the globe. He asked the government to approach the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and United Nations Organization (UNO) for highlighting this important issue.

He urged that the people involved in this crime should be punished. MNA Moulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali said it was the fundamental part of Muslims' faith to love Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) more than their children and parents. He suggested the government to call back Pakistan's High Commissioner from India and expel Indian High Commissioner from Pakistan. MNA Sabir Hussain Kaim Khani said all Muslims were ready to sacrifice their lives for sanctity of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad Rasool Allah Khatmun-Nabbiyyin (SAWW.) Minister for Religious Affairs Mufti Abdul Shakoor while participating in the debate asked Muslims living across the world to exhibit greater unity and shun their difference and give a strong reaction to India on this issue. While criticizing the World Human Rights Organization, he said, that it

was unfortunate that they all remained silent on this important issue. He said Pakistan would invite members from all Muslims countries in the Rehmat Ul Alameen (SAW) Conference in Rabi-ul-Awwal during which a strategy would be devised to prevent derogatory remarks against Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) in the world. He asked the Prime Minister to raise this issue in Generation Assembly of the United Nations Security Council. MNA Shagufta Jamani strongly condemned the derogatory remarks and asked the government to take up the issue at all the international forums. MNAs Ghaus Bux Khan Mahar, Muhammad Afzal Khan Dhandla Salahuddin Ayubi and Nisar Ahmed Cheema participated in the debate and expressed their concerns, condemning the derogatory remarks in the strongest term. – APP

Strategy evolved to modernize agri sector

DNA

ISLAMABAD, JUN 13 (DNA) – The government has devised a comprehensive plan for agriculture modernization to enhance agriculture productivity on modern lines and help promote overall economic growth of the country. National Action Plan specially has focus on capacity building, germplasm resources, agricultural product processing, agricultural technology extension, fishery science and technology, aquaculture, and aquatic product processing, official sources said. The action plan also includes establishment of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) free zones, market information and agricultural trade and cooperation for agricultural development. According to official document, other initiatives proposed for fiscal year 2022-23 in agriculture sector include, corporate agriculture farming, deceleration of FMD Free Zones and local production of FMD vaccines and mechanization harvesting and post harvesting processes. Agriculture sector, the backbone of country's economy is expected to grow by 3.9 percent during the upcoming fiscal year (2022-23). However, the projected agriculture growth performance at 3.9 percent would mainly contingent upon revival of cotton and wheat production, consistent availability of water, certified seeds, fertilizers,

pesticides and agriculture credit facilities. Revival of both these crops would not only support growth momentum but will also ease out Balance of Payment pressures through lesser import requirements. It is pertinent to mention here that during the current fiscal year, agriculture sector exceeded its envisaged targets of Annual Plan 2021-22 (3.5 percent) given the strong crop sector performance. Agriculture sector posted growth of 4.4 percent against the last year growth of 3.5 percent. The Production of important crops including sugarcane, rice and maize crops achieved record production with impressive increase in per acre yield. Although, cotton production remained below target during 2021-22, however, it was 17.9 percent greater than the crop output of last year. Keeping in view almost 7 percent reduction in area under cultivation, the performance of cotton crop is also impressive. However, wheat yield was affected by urea availability and disruptions in irrigation water supply, increase in rust prevalence and high temperatures in the last fortnight of March (heat wave), according to the document. Meanwhile, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) had assigned annual indicative agricultural credit disbursement target of Rs. 1,700 billion for 2021-22, which was 24.5 percent higher than last year's disbursement of Rs. 1,366 billion.

Prices of food items continue to rise sharply

YOOSUF BHUTTA

GUJRAT: Prices of food items continue to rise sharply across the district, with the district administration remaining a silent spectator. The Assistant Commissioner who took action against the price-hikers was also transferred. According to details, the price of flour which remained rupees 40 per kg in the month of Ramadan has gone up to Rs 90 per kg. The price of rice has gone up from Rs 130 per kg to Rs 230 per kg. The price of milk has gone up from Rs 100 per kg to Rs 150 per kg. Similarly at least 30-150% rise in prices of vegetables and fruits is observed here. Consumers are raising hue and cry through local and social media but there is no action from the responsible authorities taken so far.

Ulema conference held on population issue

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination in collaboration with the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII) on Monday arranged an Ulema Conference on the population issue. The conference was attended by a score of renowned religious scholars of different schools of thought. Minister for Health, Abdul Qadir Baloch was the chief guest at the Conference. Addressing the gathering, the minister said that the population of Pakistan is increasing unabatedly. Uncontrolled population increase puts pressure on the already fragile health and education sectors along with effecting climate change, he said. "There have been many efforts by the previous governments to control the population but we have not been able to reach our goals. We must strive to work on this," the minister said. He said that the role of Ulema is very important and appreciated the efforts of the population program wing to take Ulemas on board. He emphasized that the Ulemas can play an integral role in the social fabric of the society. He stressed the need of replicating these efforts on a provincial level. He added for the operationalization and implementation of CCI recommendations, a population action plan in consultation with the provinces and other stakeholders was prepared by the Ministry of National Health Services and approved by the Federal Task Force on Population. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Egypt to Pakistan Tarek Dahrour calls on Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. – DNA

Canadian HC visits Shehla Raza to discuss Healthy Family Project

DNA

KARACHI: Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan Wendy Gilmour along with a delegation called on Sindh Provincial Minister for Women's Development Syeda Shehla Raza at her office. The delegation also included United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative Bakhtior Kadroo, Program Assistant Ijaz Ahmed and SRH Analyst Saadat Hussain Khokhar. Provincial Minister Syeda Shehla Raza warmly welcomed the delegation. The delegation has discussed the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)'s "Sehat Mand Khaandan (SMK) project in collaboration with Agha Khan Foundation Pakistan (AKFP) and supported by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) to help/improve access of Women and girls to reproductive health services including family planning and maternal health. The delegation also informed the provincial minister about its visit to Safe House



in Qambar Shahdaddot and declared it suitable for the project. Provincial Minister Syeda Shehla Raza assured her full support for speedy implemen-

tation of the project while the delegation was also given a detailed briefing on various projects under the Sindh Women's Development Department.

Water reservoirs touch dead level in country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The water level in three major reservoirs of the country including Tarbela Dam, Mangla Dam, and Chashma Barrage has reached the dead level. Following the depletion of water to an alarming level in Tarbela Dam and Chashma Barrage, the Mangla Dam too has reached the dead level, leaving the total storage of water at 79,000-acre feet in it. According to the officials of the Indus River System Authority (Irsa), the water inflow in Tarbela Dam is 89,400 cusecs, whereas, the water outflow in it is 88,600 cusecs. Similarly, Mangla Dam has an inflow of 21,300 cusecs of water and an outflow of 23,700 cusecs of water, said the Irsa officials. Moreover, the water inflow in Chashma Barrage is 17,400

cusecs, whereas, the water outflow in it is 13,100 cusecs. Furthermore, the water inflow in Chenab River at Head Marala is 26,800 cusecs while the water outflow is 17,200 cusecs. At Nowshera, the Kabul River has an inflow of 21,300 cusecs of water and an outflow of 21,300 cusecs of water. Meanwhile, prolonged outages continue in different areas of the country including big cities. In Karachi, there is only nine-hour power supply in 24 hours, for different areas of the city are hit by 12 to 15 hours of power outages. Citizens are reported to have been reeling under shocks from prolonged power loadshedding. People living in different areas of the city complain that there is unannounced power loadshedding in Karachi, adding that power supply remains suspended throughout the night.

RWU holds workshop on 'Live the Life You Love'

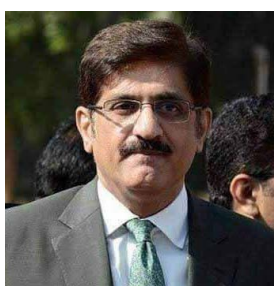
RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Women University (RWU) on Monday hosted a workshop on the topic "Live the Life You Love." Mental health psychologist Dr Imran Yousaf (SI), who is also the Managing Director of Jofa Group and founder of Transformational International Society, graced the workshop as a resource person. The aim of the workshop was to highlight the importance of the positive attitude in life for problem identification and solution finding. – APP

Digitalization of Parliament vital for productivity: NA Speaker

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Raja Pervez Ashraf on Monday said that digitalization of Parliament would make it more effective and productive to deal with daily matters of legislation. He said that introducing Google office, in the National Assembly's Secretariat, would make Parliament of Pakistan first paperless legislature in the South Asia. He expressed these views during his meeting regarding "Digital Innovation Hub" with the CEO Tech Valley and Representatives of Google team from different countries, said a news release. Raja Pervez Ashraf also held that the digitalization and Google office would transform the ambience of Parliament. He also instructed to complete the project of Parliament's digitalization at the earliest. He said that adopting artificial intelligence based information technology would make the staff of assembly more productive. CEO Tech Valley Umer Farooq briefed the participants that in entire South Asia, Pakistan's parliament is credited to adopt digitalization. He also apprised that the Tech valley was a google partner for digitalization of Parliament.

Murad announces tax relief for IT industry



DNA

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has announced relief to the IT industry by reducing the rate of Sindh Sales Tax on IT, software business and on call centers from 13 percent to 3 percent without input tax credit. However, large establishments prefer standard rate with input tax credit, they shall have the option of 13 percent with input tax credit facilities. He made this announcement while speaking at a seminar organized by Sindh Information Science & Technology department and Pakistan Software Export Board & P@ASHA on the topic of Ease of Doing Business for IT/ITeS Industry at a local hotel. The seminar was attended by Federal Minister for IT Syed Aminul Haq, CM Special Assistant on IT Tanzania and others. Mr Shah said that he would announce the relief to the IT industry in his budget speech tomorrow (Tuesday). HR Building: The CM said that Extensive growth in IT

exports have put pressure on the supply of quality HR. "If we don't immediately invest in our HR building then we will lose the trajectory of growth," he said and added his government was fully aware of this supply and demand gap and has planned to initiate multiple skill building programmes in the next financial year. The programmes the CM announced to initiate include High-end bootcamps for the youth, Skill building for teachers and trainers, Digital literacy for primary and secondary, Skill program for Girls and Skill and freelancing programs for differently abled persons. Innovation & Entrepreneurship: Mr Shah said that Digital transformation of Sindh could only become a reality if we employ effective public private partnership. "In order to reengineer the existing government processes and introduce innovative citizen services it is imperative to engage our youth, involved in innovative ideas and solutions, into government systems," he said and added for fulfilling this objective the government of Sindh was focusing on different programs including "Promote startup culture through incubators and accelerators, Private Equity (PE) and Venture Capital (VC) funding, Startup induction in Govt. operations/services and Special Incentivize for women owned startups.

Pakistan, ADB discuss country partnership strategy

ISLAMABAD: Director General, Asian Development Bank (ADB), Eugene Zhukov here on Monday apprised the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Miftah Ismail about the Country Partnership Strategy for Pakistan 2021-25, which is aligned with the government's development vision. He was talking to finance minister during a meeting, which among others were also attended by Country Director ADB, Yong Ye, Secretary Finance, senior officers from Finance and Economic Affairs Divisions. Policy based programme for energy sector, women inclusive finance sector development, public-private partnership reforms and SOE sector development plan were also discussed. A proposed counter cyclical Support Facility (CSF) to help mitigate the impact of external shocks by the ADB was also discussed. In addition, it was also shared that various agreements in field of social protection, energy, and urban infrastructure are already ongoing in Pakistan with the assistance of ADB.

Welcoming Eugene Zhukov and the team from ADB, Finance Minister Miftah Ismail appreciated ADB's support in continuation of reform and development agenda in Pakistan. The Finance Minister apprised the



delegation on the macro-economic situation and various budgetary and non-budgetary measures being undertaken by the present government to correct the imbalances. It was also shared that irrespective

of severe fiscal and monetary challenges, the present government was focusing on effective structural reform measures for putting the economy on path of inclusivity and sustainability. The Finance Minister thanked the ADB delegation for their support and assured them of full support and speedy implementation of the ongoing programs. Meanwhile, the finance minister also held a meeting on facility confirmation of LCs for oil imports. The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hina Rabbani Khar, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue, Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Chairman Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority and senior officers. The meeting discussed issues regarding opening of LCs for oil imports and steps for resolving the issues for smooth supply of energy chain in the country. After, comprehensive deliberation on the pragmatic way outs, the chair directed the relevant authorities to expedite the process for resolving these issues. – APP

Pakistan, Tajikistan desire to bring peace in Afghanistan

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Tajikistan Ismatullo Nasredin says Pakistan and Tajikistan have a shared desire to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan in order to benefit from regional connectivity. He was speaking to Radio Pakistan in Islamabad. He said Pakistan is playing a key role in creating favorable conditions that could stabilize the situation in the former war torn country. He said Tajikistan is also using the capacity of Islamabad to assist these efforts in Afghanistan. Terming Afghanistan a connecting chain between Central and South Asia, Ismatullo Nasredin said without stability in Afghanistan, there can be no pro-

gress in increasing links between countries of the two neighboring regions. He said we should all strive for formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan so that people of all ethnicities get a secure society for peace and prosperity in that country. On the role of Beijing, he said China is a big power in the region that has stakes in Afghanistan and we are working together to find solution to the issues in Afghanistan. Appreciating the hosting of important meetings on Afghanistan by Islamabad, he said many important decisions have been taken in these huddles for peace and stability in that country. Turning to bilateral relations between Islamabad and Dushanbe, the Tajik ambassador Pakistan and Tajikistan have been

enjoying excellent relations in many spheres of life and both are celebrating 30th anniversary of the establishment of their diplomatic relations this year. He said we need a stable and prosperous Pakistan to play a leadership role for the Muslim countries. On two way cooperation in trade and economy, Ismatullo Nasredin said we have established Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific/Technical Cooperation to increase bilateral cooperation and its session will be hopefully held next month. He said Pakistan is very important country in the region to provide access to Central Asian Countries to the broader world. Emphasizing the need of increasing communication on economic and oth-

er opportunities available in Pakistan and Tajikistan, he said both countries should run advertising campaigns about commerce, trade and tourism prospects available in each other. He said we need to fill the gaps in our bilateral trade for the mutual benefits of the two people. He said our business circles are trying to find new avenues of increasing trade cooperation. On existing trade, he said Tajikistan is importing textile, agriculture, and pharmaceutical products from Pakistan, while dried fruit, chemicals are imported by Pakistan from Tajikistan. Regarding China Pakistan Economic Corridor, he said CPEC is important not only for China and Pakistan but also for the Central Asian countries.

It envisages roads, highways and sea ports which will benefit the two regions. Turning to economic strategy of his country, he said industrialization of Tajikistan is our priority as a shift from our traditional agrarian economy. We can benefit from experience of Pakistan in pharmaceuticals, chemicals and other sectors. The Tajik Ambassador said high level visits and contacts between the two countries manifest the depth of bilateral relationship. He said Pakistani Prime Minister visited Tajikistan in September last year to participate in SCO summit in Dushanbe. He said role of Islamabad is very important in addressing the issues present in the region including security, terrorism,

and drug smuggling. He said during high level exchanges, issue of Islamophobia also came under discussion and ways and means to address it. Pakistan has raised the issue effectively at all international forums, and we want this issue to be raised more vociferously so that a campaign of hatred against Muslims is stopped. Referring to cultural and religious ties, he said both nations are intertwined in bonds of shared religion, culture and values. He said every year we have a festival to commemorate the poetry and teachings of Sufi poet Allama Muhammad Iqbal. He said Pakistan is providing support to train civil as well as military officials from Tajikistan which is very helpful for our development.

National Days and Armed Forces Days

JUNE	
June 02 / Italy	National Day/ Independence Day
June 04 / Finland	Armed Forces Day
June 07 / Sweden	Natioal Day
June 10 / Portugal	Portugal Day (Natioal Day)
June 10 / Jordan	Arab Revolution & Army Day
June 11 / United Kingdom	Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth
June 12 / Philippines	Independence Day
June 12 / Russian Federation	Day of Sovereignty of the Russian Federation (National Day)
June 13 / Zambia	Armed Forces Day
June 17 / Iceland	National Day
June 18 / Seychells	National Day
June 25 / Croatia	National Day
June 25 / Mozambique	National Day
June 26 / Azerbaijan	Army Day



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



Airlines	
Turkish Airlines.....	8494949



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.....	561116
Cantt Hospital....	9270907-11
DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.	4603666



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

Islamabad Metropolitan	
Corporation.....	9209224
Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Water Tank	
Islamabad.....	0321-544480

COMSTECH launches capacity building program for Yemen

DNA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH in collaboration with Yemen embassy and Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Government of Yemen announced COMSTECH-CCoE Yemen Program in a press conference in Islamabad at COMSTECH Auditorium on Monday. The press conference was addressed by the Minister of Science and Technology, H. E. Mr. Agha Hassan Baloch, the Ambassador of Yemen, H. E. Mohammed Motahar Alashabi, the Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Vice Chancellor, Health Services Academy (HSA), Prof. Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan, Chairman Board of Governors, University of Lahore (UoL), Mr. Awais Raooi, Co-Director of the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi, and Mr. Ali Sattar, Director, Science Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Minister of Science and Technology appreciated the efforts of the Coordinator General COMSTECH and the Ambassador of Yemen for their efforts to plan and launch this important capacity building program for the Yemeni national. He appreciated the generous offering of fully funded fellowships by University of Lahore, Health Services Academy and International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences. Mr. Baloch urged the launch of more such tailor made country specific programs for other



OIC countries to cater their specific needs. He appreciated COMSTECH programs and reiterated the full support by the Ministry of Science and Technology to COMSTECH programs. The Ambassador of Yemen thanked COMSTECH for launching this program. He appreciated the leadership of Prof. Choudhary and his efforts for launching many capacity building programs for OIC states. He extended thanks from the people of Yemen to the Government of Pakistan, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the fellowships offering institutions. He offered full

support of the Yemen embassy whenever required for coordination between COMSTECH and the Government of Yemen. Coordinator General COMSTECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary welcomed the guests and appreciated the efforts of the Ambassador of Yemen for his interest and efforts in planning and launching this joint program. Prof. Choudhary thanked the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their full support to this and other programs of COMSTECH. He said that this program aims to provide opportunity to the Yemeni scholars and

scientists to benefit from the excellence of the three top-class member institutions of the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence. He said under this program 50 fellowships will be given to Yemeni scientists to obtain training in public health and medical technologies. Prof. Choudhary thanked ICCBS, UoL, and HSA for their generous offering of fellowships to Yemeni nationals. Prof. Choudhary also offered two more programs to Yemen to take part and get benefit from them. These include, COMSTECH Telemedicine Capacity Building Program, and COMSTECH Neuro-critical Care Program. The Vice Chancellor of HSA, the Co-Director ICCBS and the Chairman Board of Governors, University of Lahore were present at the occasion and spoke to the media. They provided details of the fellowships being offered by their respective institutions. They appreciated COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence for launching this program. While talking to the media, Ms. Aala Mazhar Bukhari Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs appreciated this COMSTECH initiative. He said that this program will not only help build capacity of the Yemeni people in the health technologies but also will help nurturing science diplomacy. He said Ministry of Foreign Affairs fully supports such international programs of COMSTECH that help build and nurture diplomatic relations along with the capacity building of science and technology for the socio-economic development. National and International media from OIC member states attended the press conference.

President for highlighting achievements of young mountaineers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has stressed the need to highlight the achievements of young Pakistani mountaineers through the media to project their potential and build a soft image of the country. The President expressed these views while talking to Pakistani mountaineers, Mr Shehroze Kashif, Mr Sirbaz Khan, and Mr Abdul Joshi, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The meeting was attended by the Secretary Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, Director General Pakistan Sports Board, President of the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP), and Secretary ACP. The President deeply appreciated the climbers and mountaineers of Pakistan for their meritorious achievements in the most challenging and adventurous game of mountaineering which is cherished around the world. He advised the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) and Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) to patronize and support the young climbers in building their careers and for the generation of a regular income stream for them. He further asked the IPT to depute a well-versed, experienced and connected brand manager to help the climbers in the management of their program schedules, seeking sponsorships from national and international Sports companies to help build their image and provide them with regular income commensurate with their achievements and skill levels.

AIOU announces schedule for online workshops

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced workshops schedule for BS, B Ed programs, and Associate degree programs. These workshops will start on June 27. These workshops will be conducted online through the university's Aaghi Learning Management System (LMS). Login information (username & password) has been shared with the students and they are instructed to participate in these workshops through Aaghi portal. All those students who have not received their username and password are instructed to contact their nearest AIOU regional office. It is pertinent to mention here that university has digitized its system and now all the students submit their assignments online. Classes and workshops of face-to-face programs are being conducted online through Aaghi portal. The campus management system (CMS) is being used for new enrollment, tutor information, roll number slips, results, and date sheets. Students can apply for degree through CMS.

Govt giving subsidy of Rs3b on ghee: Marriyum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Marriyum Aurangzeb has said the government is giving subsidy of three billion rupees to provide ghee to the masses on reduced rates. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Monday, she pointed out that the price of ghee in the open market is five hundred and fifty rupees per kilogram whilst it is being provided at the rate of three hundred rupees per kilogram through the Utility Stores Corporation. This

accounts for subsidy of 250 rupees on each kilogram of ghee. The Minister for Information said a flour bag of ten kilogram is also being provided at reduced rates of four hundred rupees through Utility Stores. She said the flour is available at the same rate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as per the promise made by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. She said one hundred mobile units and six hundred stationary sale points have been added to the system in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in order to ensure the availability of wheat flour to the masses in the province. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that price control

committees have also been constituted. She said steps are being taken to check hoarding and smuggling of the essential commodities. The Information Minister said seventeen billion rupees have been earmarked in the budget for the provision of cheap ghee, flour and sugar to the people in the next fiscal year. Alluding to the failures of the PTI government, she said the present government is taking steps to take the economy towards stability. A package has been announced in the budget for the agriculture sector. She said the government has taken practical steps to provide relief to the masses.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with UAE Ambassador, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi. – DNA

Forest fires, climate change, public behavior

MUMTAZ AHMED BHATTI



Forest fires occur all over the world. So far, millions of acres of forest have been burnt, hundreds of forest workers have been martyred and thousands have been injured. Nowhere in the world is it said that the fire was started by the forest department officials nor did any inquiry report prove that the forest fire was started by the forest employees. Whenever and wherever forest fires broke out in Punjab, Sindh, KP, Balochistan, AJK, Gilgit-Baltistan and without waiting for the inquiry report, some people issue statements stating that forest fires were started by forest employees. To say that forest department employees themselves start forest fires. So all such statements are completely wrong and have nothing to do with reality. Who would be so foolish as to set fire to the forest first and then be martyred or injured while extinguishing the fire? Such statements cause distress and mental anguish to the families of the martyrs and the injured during

the firefighting. I have been writing reports on the forest department for the last 20 years and I have visited the forest several times. No authentic news has ever been found in which it is suspected that forest department employees have started a forest fire. Baseless and false news is spread against the forest department by those who have no knowledge of forests. There has also been a flood of junk posts and comments on social media regarding forest fires. And some people are irresponsibly sharing and retweeting false news. Pakistan is the eighth most vulnerable country to extreme weather caused by climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index compiled by NGO Germanwatch. But experts say there is a lack of awareness among the population about environmental issues. Forest fires are common from mid-April through to the end of July, caused by searing temperatures and lightning as well as slash-and-burn farming. Tourists who come for sightseeing also cause forest fires. Most tourists leave the fire burning after cooking or making tea. This small mistake of a tourist turns a huge forest into a heap of ashes. Livestock is a major source of income for the community

living around forests. All livestock grazing areas are forests. According to the local community, new grass will not grow unless existing grass is set on fire. When the local community sets fire to last year's grass. Dry grass fires are so intense that they spread to large areas of forest. Mischievous are also the cause of forest fires. Now it has become a situation that TikTok star Noshin Syed proudly posted a clip of walking with an open heart in a silver ball gown in front of the burning hill of Islamabad with the caption: "Fire burns wherever I am. Lack of consciousness and ignorance is the last limit. There are three types of forest fires: ground fire, surface fire and crown fire. A ground fire is a type of wildfire that occurs in the subsurface where fuels such as peat, coal tree roots, and other buried organic matter ignite and burn under the ground. Depending on the conditions of the fire, ground fires may eventually burn through the surface of the ground and become surface fires. Because ground fires exist below the surface of the ground, they are typically more challenging to contain than surface fires. That said, these subterranean fires spread more slowly than surface fires and may burn over the course

of several months. A surface fire refers to a fire that ranges from low to high intensity depending on the conditions. Aply named, such fires burn on the surface of the ground and are primarily fueled by low-lying vegetation such as twigs or dried leaves. These fires develop from ground fires that grew enough to breach the surface. While they may scorch a tree canopy, they will not cause it to burn enough to carry a fire. Surface fires often spread slowly, but can begin to spread rapidly when they occur in an area that has a steeply sloped landscape or are pushed by wind. That said, most surface fires ultimately die out before they are able to develop into the next level of classification: crown fires. Another different type of wildfire is a crown fire. These fires burn and spread from treetop to treetop—also known as the crown or canopy of trees. Unlike ground or surface fires, which spread more slowly, crown fires spread at a rapid pace. As such, crown fires generally advance well ahead of a lower-level fire. The rapid pace of crown fires is largely due to their height, which exposes them to wind. Such wind pushes the flames and sparks from

the fire into a potentially interconnected or continuous tree canopy. Due to the quick speed at which crown fires can spread, they often turn into extremely intense fires. To ensure you are ready to face any type of wildfire that occurs, shop the extensive collection of wildland fire gear for sale at the Supply Cache. From hand-made boots to fire line tools, we have everything you need to stay safe in any type of fire event. If forest fires are to be brought under control quickly, better equipment and training of forest personnel in all four provinces, AJK and GB. The government will have to take immediate steps to strengthen the capacity of wildlife board forest guards and firefighters. The government should immediately approve special firefighting vehicles that can reach difficult areas. Purchase firefighting gear (uniforms, boots, helmets) and equipment for the staff as well as use of drones for fire detection. The government will have to carry out long-term planning and measures instead of short-term planning. Awareness campaigns should be launched in all four provinces, AJK and GB, on the importance of forests to the public and forest fires.

Briefs

DIG signs contract with DOW DUHS

ISLAMABAD: Denim International Gases (DOW), a leading manufacturer of International Standard Industrial and Medical gases, has signed a tender contract with DOW University of Health Sciences (DUHS), DOW International Dental College Hospital and Sindh Infectious Diseases Hospital and Research Centre for supply of Liquid and Compressed Medical Gases. Denim International Gases, is an ISO certified manufacturer of medical and industrial gases situated in Port Qasim, Karachi, said a news release. Supplying high quality gases to various sectors of the country since 2013. The company has a highly qualified and experienced team with over 40 years of gases manufacturing experience. COO Engr. Nazir Ahmed of Denim International Gases states "This is a great achievement as our plant offers the purest form of oxygen at 99.999% purity in Pakistan for hospitals and we foresee to continuously invest in technologies to ensure a safe and stable Pakistan. Our supply to Dow is a testament to our focus on sustainable growth in the medical gases sector as a duty to our Nation." Denim International Gases was one of the key players in supply of medical gases to various hospitals during the peak months of the Covid-19 pandemic. – APP

Share of Thermal in total energy mix stands at 60.9 %

ISLAMABAD: Despite 1.62 per cent decline in total energy mix during the current fiscal year, Thermal has still the largest share in electricity generation in the country and stood at 60.9 percent. According to the official data, "The percentage contribution of Thermal has declined from 62.5 percent during Jul-April FY2021 to 60.9 percent during Jul-April FY2022". Similarly, the percentage contribution of Hydel in electricity generation has also reduced from 27.8 percent in Jul-April FY2021 to 23.7 percent during Jul-April FY2022. However, the percentage shares of Nuclear and Renewable Energy (RE) have increased from 7.2 percent to 12.35 and from 2.4 percent to 3.02 percent respectively, during the said period. Currently, the total share of Thermal in energy mix stood at 60.9 percent, Hydel 23.7 percent, Nuclear 12.4 percent and RE 3 percent. In terms of Gigawatt hour (GWh), the Thermal stood at 74,864 GWh, Hydel 29,181 GWh, Nuclear 15,182 GWh and RE 3,709 GWh. – APP

One mln new smart ID cards issued to Afghan refugees

ISLAMABAD: Around one million Afghan refugees with children under the age of five have been issued new smart identity cards which would remain valid until June 30, 2023. Spokesman of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that the Documentation Renewal and Information Verification Exercise, known as DRIVE, was aimed at updating and verifying the data of Afghans holding a Proof of Registration (PoR) card. DRIVE also provided an opportunity for Afghan refugees to flag specific protection needs or vulnerabilities. More detailed information about refugees' socioeconomic circumstances will allow to better assist them for their self-reliance in Pakistan and more tailored support, for those who express their intention to return to Afghanistan, when conditions allow. He said that Government of Pakistan, with the support of UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, completed the verification of some 1.3 million registered Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan. Going forward, registered Afghan refugees will be able to update their registration data on an ongoing basis through 11 dedicated centres across the country. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of France taking interest in various items during a cultural show organized by the Philippine embassy. – DNA

President asks taxpayers to approach FTO for justice

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday urged the taxpayers and business community to approach the office of the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) through its complaint system for the redressal of their taxation grievances on a priority basis. Addressing an awareness seminar on the services of FTO here at the Awan-e-Sadr, he said the FTO was ensuring prompt dispensation of justice regarding the tax-related petitions at the doorsteps of the complainants. President Alvi said that engaging business entrepreneurs and the general public to increase awareness about the FTO services and expanding the outreach with the aim of creating a fair, just, and equitable tax system. He mentioned that FTO was effectively endeavoring to implement its mandate of providing cost-free justice to taxpayers within around 60 days, and even without the

obligation upon the complainant to engage a lawyer. He expressed satisfaction that FTO disposed of 2,867 complaints out of the 3,371 received during the year 2021 and added that the significant increase in numbers of complaints indicated the enhanced trust of taxpayers in the FTO office. He lauded that the average disposal time of complaints was also reduced from 68.43 days in 2020 to 57.29 days in 2021. He said it was the responsibility of all institutions under the government to improve their performance and emphasized that immediate redressal of taxpayers' problems would promote tax culture in the country. President Alvi said FTO was acting as a public relief-oriented institution with the introduction of a fast system for the registration of complaints and formulation of strategies for quick resolution of the tax-related problems. The president mentioned that he

studied every case received from FTO before giving a verdict on appeals. He said FTO's intervention had resulted in the creation of huge tax demand and recovery of millions by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) in mega cases. DrAlvi stressed that several complaints related to the petty amounts of money could be settled within the shortest possible time. Federal Tax Ombudsman DrAsifMahmood-Jah said efforts were afoot to make FTO a public-friendly organization and a platform for prompt dispensation of justice. He said FTO was safeguarding the public exchequer by detecting illegal refund claims through its own motion investigations as well as inspection of the offices of FBR. He said an amount of Rs 8,499 million was refunded in 2021 compared to Rs 8,242 million in 2020. The percentage of the complaints in the category of in-

come tax touched 59.06%, sales tax at 19.28%, customs duty at 21.41%, and Federal Excise duty at 0.25%. He mentioned that FTO was encouraging stakeholders to become part of the tax net and dismissed the impression that the body was against the actions of FBR. He said all advisers of the FTO regional offices had started dealing with specific immediate cases to make utilization of the available provision under Section 33 of the FTO Ordinance, 2000 for informal resolution of the disputes. Dr Jah said FTO facilitation desks had been established at important airports and at border customs stations to provide the necessary information and immediate relief to travelers. The awareness seminar was attended by heads of Chambers of Commerce and Industries, businessmen, and taxation experts. – APP

OIC, UN & HR organizations must rein in Modi's govt

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman on Monday strongly condemned state barbarism against Muslim protesters in India. The Minister said, "OIC, UN and all Human Rights (HR) organizations must rein in Modi's fascist government." In her condemnation message, the minister said Indian Muslims were being jailed for protesting against blasphemy in the name of Holy Prophet (PBUH). "Modi government is demolishing houses of Muslims for protesting against blasphemy. Two protesters have been killed in state violence against protesters", the minister underlined. She added that hundreds of Muslim protesters have been arrested and cases were registered against them. "The world community is turning their eyes blind over incidents of targeting Muslims in India", she said. The Minister queried that don't the civilized, freedom and rights claimants see what was happening to Muslims in India? – APP

China plays big role promoting education in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: China had played a big role in promoting the education sector in Pakistan, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday quoting Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal. "China was generously supporting Pakistan in the education sector," he said addressing the Paigham-e-Pakistan (message of Pakistan) conference. He maintained that the government had increased the higher education budget by 68% under the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP). "We have raised the budget from (Pakistani I) Rs 23 billion and set the target for Rs44 billion," he added. His remarks came a day after the government presented the federal budget worth Rs 9.5 trillion. The planning minister informed that the government had the vision to establish at least one university in every district of the country. "It is our duty to give opportunities to youth for the higher education and skills so that they can contribute back to the economy," Iqbal remarked. He announced a project to establish 250 vocational institutes across the country to provide better employment opportunities. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Members of the Philippine Diaspora presenting a performance during a cultural show organized by the Philippine embassy. – DNA

Dasu dam to trigger new era of socioeconomic development

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Water Resources Syed Khurshheed Ahmed Shah said the Dasu Hydro Power Project was a vital project would trigger a new era of socioeconomic development in the country and stabilize Pakistan's economy by providing low-cost hydel electricity to the masses. The minister visited Dasu dam site the other day accompanying Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Naveed Asghar-Chaudhry, project's management, representatives of the consultants and contractors. He said electricity generation from Dasu Hydropower Project would commence in 2026 and tremendously contribute to cope with

increasing requirement of the country by injecting sizeable cheap and green electricity to the national grid. He expressed satisfaction over pace of progress and directed WAPDA to complete the project within stipulated time frame. He also directed that the locals should be given priority in jobs on the project. A meeting would soon be convened at Islamabad with all the stakeholders to review self-managed resettlement package to address grievances of the locals, he added. Earlier, Khurshheed Shah had a detailed round of the various components of the project including diversion tunnels and powerhouse complex and reviewed construction activities going on there.

WAPDA General Manager and Project Director Anwar-ul-Haq apprised the minister that the 4320 MW- Dasu Hydropower Project was being completed in two stages. He said at present, WAPDA was constructing stage-I with installed generation capacity of 2160 MW and annual energy generation of 12 billion low-cost and environment-friendly electricity. The stage-II, when implemented, would also provide 9 billion units to the national grid, he added. On completion of the both stages, Dasu would be the project with highest annual energy generation in Pakistan i.e. 21 billion units per annum on the average. – APP

Pakistan light oil pipeline project completed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan light oil pipeline project undertaken by China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering Co., Ltd (CPP) completed, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. The MFM MoGas Project – (MFM CPP) Phase-II (TS-3 & TS-4), constructed by CPP has also successfully passed the owner's inspection. "Since we officially entered the Pakistani market in July 2014 and registered the Pakistan Branch of China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering Co., Ltd. in October 2017, we have completed a total of 9 projects here. Beyond all question, the light oil pipeline project means another challenge for us," said Wang Desheng from the TS-3 & TS-4 EPC Project Department in an interview with Gwadar Pro. "Our owner, Pak-Arab Refinery Limited (PARCO), operates a pipeline transportation system of more than 2,000 kilometers,

from Karachi in the south to Lahore in the north, which can be described as the main artery that helps Pakistan's north-south energy transmission. In recent years, demand for motor gasoline has grown rapidly in north and central Pakistan, so the PARCO started planning to use the same pipeline to transport gasoline to alleviate the shortage in the region, thereby stabilizing its market share in north-central Pakistan," Wang told Gwadar Pro, "therefore, MahmoodKot-Faisalabad-Machike (MFM) Pipeline Phase II Reconstruction and Expansion Project came into being, which also included our project." The TS-3 and TS-4 stations are located in Faisalabad and Sheikhupura, Punjab, respectively. The former includes a single gasoline storage tank (42 meters in diameter, 12.6 meters in height, and a tank capacity of 15,000 cubic meters), a fire water storage tank (15.24 meters in diameter, 13.1 meters in height and a tank

capacity of 2200 cubic meters), etc. The latter includes 2 single gasoline storage tanks (42 meters in diameter, 12.6 meters in height and a tank capacity of 15,000 cubic meters), a fire water storage tank (18.2 meters in diameter, 14.63 meters in height and a tank capacity of 3500 cubic meters) and related supporting facilities. According to Wang, their project has always adhered to the strictest engineering quality standards since the start of construction in November 2017 until the owner issued the completion certificate recently. "During the construction period of several years, our team overcame challenges such as local climate, customs differences, project safety, and successfully overcame the huge difficulties brought by the COVID-19 epidemic, and the project proceeded smoothly. It can be said that the owner's affirmation means our success," Wang emphasized. Besides, as for employment, the project also created a series of jobs to local technical talents. The report-

er learned that during the peak construction period, the total number of people on site reached nearly 400. The project department recruited a group of skilled and experienced Pakistani engineers, and the person in charge of HSE also provided training on epidemic prevention and various rules and regulations. In Wang's view, there are huge opportunities for cooperation between CPP and Pakistani companies in the oil and gas industry, which has a considerable market in Pakistan. At present, the CPP has established good cooperative relations with major oil and gas industry owners such as SSGC, SNGPL, PARCO, ISGS, OGDCL, etc. in Pakistan, and has won a good reputation locally. "In the future, we will always pay attention to local policy trends and seize the opportunity to promote the comprehensive development of large-scale oil and gas projects in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. China-Pak friendship Zindabad!"

NEPRA approves Rs 3.99 per unit positive FCA

ISLAMABAD: National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Monday approved Rs 3.99 per unit positive fuel cost adjustment (FCA) for April for XWAPDA power distribution companies. The FCA shall be charged in the billing month of June 2022 to all consumer categories of XWDISCOs, except life line consumers, said a notification. This FCA would remain applicable only for one month. However it would not be applicable to KE consumers. The Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) had requested positive FCA of Rs.4.5/kWh. However, the Authority has approved positive FCA of Rs.3.99/kWh. – APP

IRSA releases 160981 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 160981 cusecs water from various rim stations with an inflow of 159391 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 070.00 feet, which was 20.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded a 21325 and 23715 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 79387, 81814 and 48895 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River, a total of 21300 cusecs water was released at Nowshera and 27366 from the Chenab River at Marala.

Inter-provincial migration major cause of polio cases

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health, Abdul Qadir Patel Monday said that government was committed to eradicate polio from Pakistan, however, refusal of Polio drops to kids and inter-provincial migration were the basic challenges to eliminate this crippling virus. Talking to a private news channel, he said that Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only remaining countries in the world with circulating wild polio-virus, adding, government had established state of art Polio center to review the current situation. He said that due to refusal around eighth case of polio was reported this year, adding, all eight cases have been reported in North Waziristan, where parents in the region of ten refuse to get their children inoculated. Patel said eradication of Polio virus was still a challenge due to evolving situation in Afghanistan, however, efforts are underway to stop transmission of virus through intensified and coordinated efforts under the federal government's national emergency action plan. He said cooperation of all stakeholders are necessary and government would chalk out a strict strategy to control the virus, adding, a strong awareness drive would also be launched to change the mind sets of people living in far flung areas of the country. Replying to a question, he said that government was taking all practical steps to control the high prices of medicines. He said Health Card program will continue despite issues with the scheme, adding, Sindh government was also considering to launch its own health insurance scheme for the people living below poverty line.

12 held for possessing illegal weapons

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested 12 illegal arm holders and recovered arms, ammunition from their possession during operation, said a police spokesman. Rata Amral police arrested Wasim Akram and recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from his possession. Similarly, Race Course police held Naveed Ahmed and recovered 01 pistol of 30 bore from his custody. Meanwhile, Taxila police nabbed Farhan and recovered 01 rifle of 44 bore from his possession and also recovered 10 rounds of 44 bore rifle from Muhammad Zohaib and 01 pistol of 30 bore from Osama. – APP

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 336

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Global arms race

GLOBAL nuclear arsenals are expected to grow over the next decade for first time since the Cold War, according to an international study released. The world's nine nuclear-armed states – the US, Russia, Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea – continue to modernise and expand their nuclear arsenals at a rate that will likely increase over the next decade, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) found in its newly released Yearbook 2022. “There are clear indications that the reductions that have characterized global nuclear arsenals since the end of the cold war have ended,” Wilfred Wan, a senior fellow at SIPRI, was quoted as saying in the publication. All of the nuclear-armed states are expanding or upgrading their arsenals and their role in their military strategies, while also sharpening their nuclear rhetoric, said Wan, who is the director of SIPRI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme. “This is a very worrying trend,” he added.

According to SIPRI, Russia and the US together possess over 90% of all nuclear weapons, while the other seven countries are either developing or deploying new weapons systems. Since the second World War, the global arms race gained an unprecedented momentum with the start of cold war. The nuclear arms race was at its peak in 50s and 60s. However, the overall nuclear warheads' count has significantly been reduced by the United States and Russia. The countries must keep pushing for a nukes' free world. The nuclear energy should've only been used for purposes that benefit the mankind, not threaten its very existence. The nuclear warheads in Asia pose a far greater risk than in Europe, with countries like Pakistan, India, China, North Korea and now Iran striving to get a hold on nukes. God forbid if nukes are used against any country in this age, it will be a calamity like none we have ever seen.

Conflict management

Dr. Abdus Sattar Abbasi

Potential opposition or incompatibility is the first step in the conflict process in the presence of some conditions that create opportunities for conflict to develop, such as, communication gap, work design (content), work structure (groups of co-workers, their qualifications & abilities etc.)

It was an interesting experience to deliver a few sessions on conflict management to the district level leadership of an organization where everyone was convinced that conflicts are real hindrance in the progress but most of them were little inflexible to modify their existing organizational culture. It is a proven fact that conflicts significantly cost organizations both in terms of financial losses and excessive engagements of leadership for resolution of conflicts. According to studies cost of conflicts for USA has been estimated 350 billion US dollars, for UK around 66 billion US dollars and 232 billion US dollars for the Japan. In terms of time spent for conflict resolution, studies suggest that managers spent almost one quarter of their official time in resolving and mitigating conflicts while senior management may spend up to 80% of their time in addressing conflicts. Besides direct monetary cost, conflict leads to several workplace issues such as loss of productivity, absenteeism, withdrawal of people, arbitration and healthcare.

Probably the most important element in conflict management is the awareness about causes of conflict. There is an array of reasons from misunderstandings to conflicting goals which result in conflicts in an organization. We all can conveniently comprehend misinterpretations, miscalculations and personal differences. Lack of role clarification and jurisdictional ambiguities are technical aspects which need specific interventions from the management to avoid day to day conflicts in organizations. Threat to status and status

inconsistencies are psychodynamic in nature thus vary from one individual to another. Communication problems have to be addressed by the individual through continuous focus on different modes and means of modern-day communication landscape. Lack of performance standards and conflicting goals indicate organizational inability to mobilize available resources and channelize human potential to achieve organizational objectives. It is a proven fact that any organization without SMART objectives cannot realise success. Only measureable and time bound attainable objectives can facilitate organizational members to direct their efforts towards the destination. Ambiguous objective will allow people to remain in their comfort zone, which is quite natural; therefore organizations need to spend reasonable time to crystalize their objectives for convenient comprehension of all organizational members and appropriate performance appraisals along with historical analysis: otherwise people will conveniently hide behind their purposely articulated paradigms. There are numerous myths surrounding conflicts in organizational settings e.g. 'harmony is normal while conflict is abnormal', but in reality conflict is an inevitable and normal part of enduring human relationships. Probably it is the conflict which exposes inner feelings of people about their environment and people surrounding them, which can result in building new bonds and strengthening existing connections, if managed appropriately. Another myth about conflict is that 'conflict should never be escalated', but in reality sometimes productive management requires that the conflict be made larger so it can be fully addressed. Managing conflict should be orderly and polite is also a myth, in reality overly nice communication during conflicts can result in insincere exchange. Productive conflict management is often disorderly, chaotic, and confusing because during conflict usually uncertainty prevails and often situations demand wholehearted endeavour to cope with any emerging condition.

Potential opposition or incompatibility is the first step in the conflict process in the presence of some conditions that create opportunities for conflict to develop, such as, communication gap, work design (content), work structure (groups of co-workers, their qualifications & abilities etc.) and personal variables e.g. authoritarianism & dogmatism etc. Cognition and personalisation is the second stage in the evolution of conflict, which is considered as the felt level when individuals become emotionally involved and parties experience anxiety, tension or hostility, here parties decide what the conflict is about and emotions play a major role in shaping perceptions. Stage three in the evolution of conflict is analysing intentions. Intentions are decisions to act in each way, intentions intervene between people's perception and emotions and their explicit behaviour. These intentions lead to future course of actions after perceiving and personalising the conflict. Behaviour forms stage four in conflict evolution when conflict is

visibly evident. Specific behaviour towards the conflict are exhibited, statements are made, actions are taken, and reactions are recorded to register personal opinion about the conflict. These behaviours at this stage are usually open attempts to implement each party's intentions. There is always an outcome of a conflict either positive or negative. In case of functional outcome there is an improvement in the performance while dysfunctional outcome hinders group's performance. Conflict is constructive when it improves the quality of decisions, stimulates creativity & innovations, and encourages interest & curiosity among group members. Conflict is dysfunctional when breeds dissatisfaction, and can potentially lead to the destruction of the group.

We join organizations by our own choice irrespective of formal sector employment, informal sector engagement, development sector commitment, voluntary sector initiative or political binding. No one teams under coercion, but still we witness harsh behaviours, daily frictions, and individual incompatibilities, because, we live in a human society and it is just normal to have prejudices, perceptions, offences, beliefs, and political, cultural & economic backgrounds which actually trigger conflicts. There are different approaches to handle conflicts in both personal and professional lives. Probably the most challenging approach is termed as 'competing' (I win, you lose) or sometimes referred as 'forcing' is an approach when conflict has vital implications for organisational operations, then leaders/managers take decisive actions in a swift manner to save interest of entire organisation including those who are part of a conflict. However, in any case, it certainly seems imposing and may be considered unpopular measure.

In my opinion, all other approaches certainly have a potential to inculcate cohesiveness in organizations if implemented prudently. Conflicts do arise among people when everyone is determined to lead his/her organisation to achieve set objective but through different arrangements. In such situations 'collaborating' (I win, you win) or 'problem solving' approach can serve the best. An avoiding (no winners, no losers) on minor deviation to accommodate human errors is probably a good approach. Accommodating (I lose, you win) others during the conflict is essentially a daunting task when apparently one is an intruding side. Still there are examples of selflessness and accommodating faults of others on the workplace, but such instances are quite rare. When collective objectives take precedence, then conflicting parties do give up something for combined benefit, it is called 'compromising' (you bend, I bend) or 'resolution', it is probably the most suitable approach for the long-term benefit of conflicting parties and their organizations.

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Preventing the next pandemic

THE Covid-19 pandemic has reshaped attitudes toward public health, fiscal policy, and the state's role in the economy. Demands for greater supply-chain resilience and strategic autonomy in developing and producing medicines have given rise to the concept of “life-science sovereignty.”

French President Emmanuel Macron, for example, has announced an ambitious plan calling for France to produce at least 20 new biotechnologies by 2030. With financing from the French public investment bank, his government's La French Care initiative aims to support the domestic biotech ecosystem and turn France into a “pioneer mRNA nation.” Similarly, many other governments – from the Netherlands to the United Kingdom – are doubling down on their domestic biotech sectors. This attention is welcome, but will it be enough? As the COVID experience has shown, securing approvals for a handful of vaccines and therapeutics requires hundreds of clinical trials for existing and new compounds – many of which fail. Medical innovation is expensive, and the costs and risks associated with it tend to be misunderstood by policymakers and ordinary citizens alike.

By the early 2010s, most large pharmaceutical firms had terminated their investments in the technology entirely. Only a handful of companies remained committed, eventually solving the delivery problem with lipid nanoparticles (LNP) as a carrier for RNAi. To help domestic companies grow internationally, governments need to ensure that their policies are conducive to attracting both human and financial capital from abroad. The UK seems to understand this. Through its Biobank, a large-scale biomedical database and research resource, it is leveraging National Health Service (NHS) data to build partnerships with global companies and researchers, ultimately leading to the development of new medicines. Medical innovation requires considerable funds from both the public and private sectors. Here, Europe continues to trail the United States. Much more funding will be needed for it to catch up and – perhaps more importantly – not be overtaken by China in the global biotech race.

Finally, to ensure financial sustainability and a continuous cycle of investment, market and policy incentives must be aligned to reward innovation. Here, too, Europe is far behind the US. Because the European market is so fragmented, it takes much longer for innovations to become accessible there, leading to lower returns on investment. Between the limited growth opportunities and the commercial risks associated with unfavorable market access, there are many disincentives for investment in research capacity and clinical trials.

Muslim world calls out radical narratives from India's BJP

Baria Alamuddin



In India's largest state, Uttar Pradesh, there have been dozens of murderous attacks by Hindu mobs who often accused their victims of cow slaughter. The BJP inevitably sided with the killers

In a few short years, under the stewardship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has lurched from secular democracy to demagogic theocracy.

Although Hinduism has traditionally coexisted amicably with many other religious beliefs, India's governing Bharatiya Janata Party champions Hindutva – until recently a radical fringe ideology committed to rendering 276 million non-Hindus second-class citizens, or even non-citizens. The BJP's primary target has been India's 200 million Muslims, and the eradication of India's cultural heritage as a synthesis of Islamic and Indic traditions.

Muslim-majority states have demonstrated this month that BJP incitement against the Prophet Muhammad is a red line, with assertive diplomatic demarches and spontaneous public support for boycotts. The Gulf states are among India's largest trading partners. With billions of dollars in remittances from over eight million Indian workers throughout the GCC keeping the Indian economy afloat, this is a warning shot for the BJP's anti-pluralism agenda. The Gulf states potentially wield a powerful economic veto over the BJP and other Asian leaderships who seek to oppress or eradicate their Muslim populations.

Incompetent responses to the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to mass burnings of bodies. Botched lockdowns prompted millions of destitute migrant workers to flood out of cities, accelerating the spread of the virus, while Modi encouraged maskless political rallies and super spreader million-person Hindu pilgrimages. As the authors of a recent book on India observed: “The pestilence hadn't gutted India's health system, it merely showed it for what it was.”

Militant BJP-affiliated academics claim that India invented nuclear weapons, stem-cell technology, aircraft and the internet – thousands of years ago! It

is one thing for BJP members to wallow in such ultra-nationalist nonsense, but when this constitutes the raw material for school textbooks, we should fear for future generations.

Post-independence India always seemed like a miraculous impossibility: Of the world's 10 most populous nations, only the US and India are long-established democracies.

Modi nevertheless finds himself feted by the West as a bulwark against China and Russia. Western leaders appear to believe that they can combat belligerent autocrats in one location by co-opting up to equally dangerous figures elsewhere. Just witness those politicians who argued that an oil boycott against Russia could be achieved by slashing sanctions against Iran.

Developments in India run in parallel to populist tendencies elsewhere. A US Congressional investigation is currently laying bare how close America came to a coup by its sitting president on Jan. 6, 2021. The reliance of some Republicans on “white grievance” to mobilize their supporters has exact parallels in the BJP's Hindu supremacism.

Likewise, Israel's apartheid policies reduce Palestinians to precarious non-citizens. Just as in India, Israel devolved from decades of being politically dominated by the centrist Labor Party to surrendering its democracy to ever-more ruthless and messianic extreme-right coalitions. Elsewhere, there are similar demagogic playbooks operating in Iran, Turkey, Russia, Hungary and Brazil. Thus, the BJP is just one manifestation of a populist pandemic that has infected the planet. This fever will break only when citizens wise up and choose real leaders who are genuinely committed to making lives better – not quasi-fascists who cling to power by triggering race wars, inciting genocide, and pouring fuel on the fires of hatred and intolerance.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Covid-19 vaccination in Pakistan: Impact and perspective for the future

Professor Bushra Jamil

Effective vaccination plan, tailored to local needs (like other non-pharmacological interventions) was successful in containment of disease. Seven different types of vaccines were rolled out in phases for healthcare workers, elderly, immunosuppressed and general population

COVID-19 pandemic has presented a number of challenges to mankind and will not end with the virus disappearing from the face of the earth. It is now widely believed that world-wide, enough people will gain immune protection from vaccination and from natural infection leading to less transmission and much less Covid-19-related hospitalizations and death, even as the virus continues to circulate, as endemic. According to Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus of World Health Organization, the acute phase of the pandemic may end by mid-2022, if about 70 percent of the world gets vaccinated, highlighting the importance of vaccine-induced immunity as the single most important factor in ending the pandemic. However, with varying levels of interventions and unpredictable emergence of Variants of Concern (VOC) in addition to population and environment-related factors, periodic increases in cases of outbreak or epidemic, well beyond the endemic levels, are likely to occur. Vaccines are among the most effective interventions in

modern medicine and save millions of lives each year. Ever since Edward Jenner's first use of a vaccine against smallpox in 1796, the use of vaccines has become indispensable to the eradication of infectious diseases.

Vaccines work by training and preparing the body's natural defenses and the immune system to recognize and fight off the viruses and bacteria they target. After vaccination, if the body is later exposed to those disease-causing germs, the body is immediately ready to destroy them, thus preventing illness. Vaccines represent the least expensive and most simple way to protect against devastating epidemics and have played a pivotal role in combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

Currently, re-exposure and evolution of new variants is driving the pandemic. Covid-19 vaccines may not prevent infection after exposure to SARS CoV-2. The main benefits of these vaccines include prevention of symptomatic infection and development of serious disease requiring hospitalization and death from Covid-19. Prevention of severe symptomatic disease indirectly leads to economic benefits as well, by preventing hospitalizations, decreasing burden on health systems, avoiding long-term disability, and reducing absence from work.

Pakistan's Covid-19 control strategy has been lauded by international organizations including the WHO. The effective vaccination plan, tailored to local needs (like other non-pharmacological interventions) was successful in containment of disease. Seven different types of vaccines were rolled out in phases for healthcare workers, elderly, immunosuppressed (high risk groups) and general population. All vaccines were found to be effective with negligible adverse events. Vaccinated individuals were noted to be 7 times less likely to develop severe symptomatic disease requiring hospitalization.

Immunity to SARS CoV-2 wanes over time and breakthrough infections have been reported in persons who have completed a primary vaccination series. A subsequent additional dose of the vaccine (i.e. a booster dose) has been shown to restore vaccine effectiveness against infection and severe/critical disease. First booster dose is now recommended 5 months after the primary series and second booster dose may be administered 4 months after the first booster dose.

As countries transition over time to managing Covid -19 as an endemic disease, the world may reach a long-term state of disease prevention similar to that seen with the flu, with annual or twice yearly booster doses. In the short term, an accelerated rollout of booster doses of Covid -19 vaccines is likely to be one of the best protections against new VOC-fueled wave of the disease.

The pandemic to endemic transition would be complete when the overall Covid-19 disease rates become static – neither rising, nor falling. However, endemicity should not be considered a benign phenomenon. A disease can be endemic and yet be widespread and deadly. Endemicity does not imply that evolution has somehow tamed a pathogen so that life simply returns to ‘normal’. There can still be disruptive waves arising from endemic infections, as seen with other infectious diseases like measles.

Persistence of SARS-CoV-2 as an endemic virus, perhaps with seasonal epidemic peaks, may be fueled by pockets of susceptible individuals and waning immunity after infection or vaccination; emergence of VOCs that escape vaccine-induced immunity and re-entries from zoonotic reservoirs are factors which will impact long term behavior of the virus and its ongoing transmission in different populations.

In light of the extensive infection rate and the enormity of cases, hospitalization and severe illness, fourth dose of vaccination is being recommended for those aged 18 and older, those with pre-existing conditions and risk factors for severe Covid-19 illness, for their caregivers and for anyone else at high risk for exposure to a confirmed Covid-19 patient in their line of work. Studies show that those vaccinated with the fourth vaccine are twice as protected against infection than those vaccinated with three doses, and 3 to 5 times better protected from severe illness compared to those vaccinated with three doses.

Pakistan is currently offering first and second booster doses to eligible groups. Guidelines, policies and plans are being regularly reviewed and updated based on available international data to protect the health of our people.

– Professor Bushra Jamil IA RHW Consultant Infectious Diseases, The Aga Khan University Member NCOC, MINHSRC; PHEOC, NIH Islamabad

Briefs

Rupee breaks all records...

FROM PAGE 01

The rupee has maintained a downward trend for the last 13 months. It has lost 33.88% (or Rs51.59) to date, compared to the record high of Rs152.27 recorded in May 2021.

Hammad sees doubling...

FROM PAGE 01

Talking about the expensive electricity projects, he said that at present Pakistan was producing the most expensive electricity, which was made from the imported fuel plants installed by Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) government. Hamad Azhar revealed that many of these plants were being run by the government at low capacity to reduce losses, adding that power shortfall was nearing 7,000MW. He said that the incumbent coalition government destroyed every sector due to their ineptness and incompetence.

'PML-N, ECP plotting to rig next...

FROM PAGE 01

Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sikander Sultan Raja resignation to ensure transparency in the polls. Imran, the ousted premier, also hinted at the possibility of snap polls, saying that he is expecting that the elections would be held soon. Speaking about the prevailing economic crisis, the former prime minister reiterated his allegations that incumbent rulers were installed into power through the US-backed regime change conspiracy which he said cannot dare to buy oil from Russia at discounted rates. "Despite the being the ally of the US, India is purchasing oil, weapons from Russia but slaves [incumbent government] is not allowed to buy oil." He also lashed out at Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, saying that he had become the in charge of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) and appointed his loyalist to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to "close down" his corruption cases. "They did not come [in power] for the people of Pakistan... they only came to get relief in corruption cases. We don't expect anything from this imported government," he added. Speaking about the Russia-Ukraine conflict, Imran said the war has sparked fears of famine in the country due to a shortage of wheat.

JUI Sherani group aligns with PTI

FROM PAGE 01

Imran Khan in which alliance and partnership was formally announced. Former NA deputy speaker Qasim Suri, former FM Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri, Senator Ijaz Chaudhry were also present in the meeting. Maulana Sherani said that the struggle against Islamophobia is one of the commonalities. Imran Khan welcomed the Head of JUI Sherani Group Maulana Khan Sherani along with a 25-member and said that PTI strives to achieve higher political and social goals beyond traditional politics.

FM Bilawal to visit Iran

FROM PAGE 01

Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's visit to Iran is part of regular high-level exchanges between the two countries. The last meeting between the two Foreign Ministers was held on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos on 26 May 2022. Pakistan and Iran enjoy close cooperative ties, based on shared geography, cultural affinities, and historic people-to-people linkages. These fraternal relations have been further strengthened through frequent high-level exchanges. The two countries are celebrating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2022.

Daniil Medvedev dethrones Djokovic as world number one

Medvedev, 26, won his maiden major title at last year's US Open and also reached the 2022 Australian Open final. He was glad that his rise to the top spot was "step by step"

DNA

MOSCOW: Russian Daniil Medvedev returned for a second stint as the men's world number one on Monday, replacing Novak Djokovic at the top of the world rankings. German Alexander Zverev rose to a career-high second spot with Djokovic slipping to third following his defeat to Rafael Nadal in the quarter-finals of the French Open, which the Serb won last year. It was the first time since November, 2003, that none of Djokovic, Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer or Andy Murray appeared in the top two rankings spots in the men's game. Medvedev, 26, won his maiden major title at last year's U.S. Open and also reached the 2022 Australian Open final. He was glad that his rise to the top spot was "step by step". "The number one is really tough because that's where you need to be consistent throughout 52 weeks," Medvedev, who lost to Dutch wildcard Tim van Rijthoven in the final of the ATP 250 event in Netherlands on Sunday, told the ATP. "I would say even if you win two, three



slams in a year but then you don't play any other tournament you're not going to get to number one." Medvedev is yet to win a title in 2022 and he did not hide his disappointment with his performance in recent months. "At the same time I still have the points that I earned through the tough process from last 52 weeks and I'm happy that it managed to be enough to be more



than any other tennis player in the world right now," he said. Nadal was fourth in Monday's latest rankings with Britain's Andy Murray rising to 47th following his runner-up finish in Stuttgart. Medvedev became the first player other than Djokovic, Nadal, Federer or Murray to top the men's rankings in 18 years when he rose to the top at the end of

February. But he lasted there for just three weeks before Djokovic, who was not allowed to defend his 2021 Australian Open title due to his unvaccinated status against COVID-19, reclaimed the spot. The return to the top ranking will come as good news for Medvedev, who will be unable to compete at Wimbledon as Russian and Belarusian players are banned due to Moscow's ongoing invasion of Ukraine.

And with Zverev recuperating from surgery due to torn ligaments in his ankle, it will mean that the grasscourt major will be without the top two-ranked men's players. Despite his absence from Wimbledon, however, Medvedev could extend his lead at the top of the rankings as Djokovic will lose the 2,000 points he earned for his triumph in 2021. The men's and women's tour have stripped the tournament of any rankings points due to their exclusion of players based on nationality.

There were no major moves at the top of the women's rankings with Poland's Iga Swiatek, Anett Kontaveit of Estonia and Spaniard Paula Badosa continuing to occupy the first, second and third spots respectively.

Tuba bags ICC Women's Player of the Month award

DNA



KARACHI: Pakistan's Tuba Hassan Monday bagged the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Women's Player of the Month for May 2022 in her very first month in international cricket.

Tuba made her international debut against Sri Lanka in a T20I series in May and earned the prestigious Player of the Month award in her first nomination. As a result, she became the first Pakistani player to be named ICC Women's Player of the Month.

In her maiden international game, Hassan recorded brilliant figures of 3/8, which fetched her the Player of the Match award on her debut. She struck with her second international ball to dismiss Anushka Sanjeevani and subsequently scalped Harshitha Madavi and Kavisha Dilhari. She took a wicket in each of the next two games but was miserly in her economy. She finished the series with five wickets at an average of 8.8 and an economy rate of 3.66, earning her the Player of the Series award in Pakistan's 3-0 white-wash victory.

Berrettini defeats injury-hit Murray for Stuttgart title



STUTTGART: Matteo Berrettini made a winning return to tennis on Sunday when he defeated an injury-hit Andy Murray 6-4, 5-7, 6-3 to win the Stuttgart grass court title. Berrettini, who last played in March and then underwent hand surgery, won his ninth Stuttgart match without a loss as he backed up his 2019 debut trophy on the grass of the Weissenhof Club. Murray, who took the match into a deciding third set as he played in the 70th final of his career, was bothered by apparent groin pain and was seen by the trainer after dropping serve to love to begin the final set.

"This is so unbelievable," 10th-ranked Berrettini said after claiming his first title since winning Queen's Club last June. "This was the last thing I could have imagined when I came back to the court. I thought for a second I might not be able to play this event, now that I'm here holding the trophy it does not seem real. "My goal was to do well after the first surgery of my life. I didn't play my best tennis at the start of the week, but I got better with each match." Berrettini gave the 68th-ranked Murray full credit for a top effort. "Andy has showed many times how he can come back," the 26-year-old Italian said. "This is not the way we would have wanted to finish the match (Murray's on-court treatment). I'm sorry for him, he's still a great champion." Murray leaves Germany with renewed confidence as he heads to Queen's next week. "It's been an incredible week for my first time here," the 35-year-old said. - DNA



mistake," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos.

"We lacked aggression. We would have preferred to stay top of the group, but I have always said that the decisive match will be the one against Spain." Victory was a welcome boost for a Swiss side who went into the game having lost their previous three matches. Spain stay top of League A Group 2 with eight points from four games with Portugal a point further back. Erling Haaland scored twice and set up the third as Norway beat neighbours Sweden 3-2 in Oslo in League B. "I'm speechless!" the 21-year-old striker told Norwegian television, before adding: "To win against Sweden in the last match of the season, it's beautiful." Haaland, who is heading for Manchester City from Borussia Dortmund this summer, gave Norway the lead in the 10th minute heading in a near-post cross. - DNA

Permanent use of five substitutes approved

DOHA: Football's rules body on Monday said that five substitutes would be permanently introduced for all top games and that a 3D offside detector is closer to being introduced for this year's World Cup. FIFA president Gianni Infantino said the substitute change, which was started in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, followed "strong support from the entire football community". He said after the annual meeting of the International Football Associations Board that experts would decide on whether "semi-automatic offside" detection would be used for the World Cup that starts November 21. FIFA's referees chief Pierluigi Collina said he was "confident" that the system would be introduced in time for the 32-nation tournament. Tests were started to speed up decision making and reduce the scope for controversy in making offside calls at top games. The system monitors 29 data points on the limbs of players to create a skeletal, three-dimensional model that is reviewed pitchside by the referee. English Football Association chief executive Mark Bullingham said that more than eight million data position points are recorded each match. The system has already been tried at the FIFA Arab Cup last year in Doha and the Club World Cup in February. "We are very satisfied so far and our experts are looking into it before deciding whether it will be introduced for the World Cup," Infantino told a press conference. - APP

Spain celebrate as Portugal lose

PARIS: Spain won a second successive UEFA Nations League match on Sunday with a 2-0 win over the Czech Republic while rivals Portugal conceded a goal after just 57 seconds to lose to Switzerland. Spain went in front in Malaga after 24 minutes when a perfectly-weighted pass by Marco Asensio released Carlos Soler to score. Pablo Sarabia added the second on 75 minutes as Spain got the better of a Czech side against whom they had drawn 2-2 in Prague last week. Despite the win, Spain were indebted to some fine saves by Athletic Bilbao goalkeeper Unai Simon. He thwarted an 18th-minute strike from Vaclav Cerny and, two minutes later, denied Jan Kuchta. "I hope to return in the next international window and go to the World Cup," said Soler. "But now I only think of going on vacation. It's been a very tough season, which started with the Tokyo Olympics. I have made many dreams come true, but I hope to make many more come true." In Geneva, Switzerland took the lead after just 57 seconds against a Portugal side playing without Cristiano Ronaldo when Haris Seferovic scored from Silvan Widmer's pass. Portugal's stand-in skipper Pepe made his 128th international appearance and they were unlucky not to get something from the game with Swiss keeper Jonas Omlin saving from Danilo and Bernardo Silva. "We can't concede a goal after 30 seconds of the game. It's our

Grant makes history with Scandinavian Mixed win

The tournament, featuring men from the DP World Tour circuit and women from the Ladies European Tour (LET) all playing the same course, saw the 22-year-old Swede claim her third title in just six starts this season

DNA

SWEDEN: Sweden's Linn Grant made history on Sunday when she became the first female winner of a European men's tour event with a nine-shot triumph at the Scandinavian Mixed. The tournament, featuring men from the DP World Tour circuit and women from the Ladies European Tour (LET) all playing the same course, saw the 22-year-old Swede claim her third title in just six starts this season. "I just hope that people recognise women's golf, more sponsors go to the LET and hopefully this pumps up the women's game a little bit more," she said. Grant did not put a foot wrong at Halmstad Golf Club, stretching her overnight lead from two shots to seven with five birdies in the first six holes. She kept her card clean with three successive pars despite pouring rain before making another birdie on the tenth. Grant picked up further shots at the 11th and 14th to get to 24 under par and win by the biggest margin on the DP World Tour - the rebranded European Tour - so far this season. "It's huge. Just playing at home and having the crowds here, my fam-

ily by my side, boyfriend on the bag - it's crazy and I'm proud of myself," Grant told european-tour.com. "Pontus (Grant's caddy and boyfriend) has been amazing, keeping me calm and doing everything right. The crowds are, like always, amazing. Swedish crowds!"

When asked if she particularly wanted to beat the men this week, Grant said: "For sure. The most important thing! 'It's a nice feeling. All week I just felt like it's the girls against the guys and whoever picks up that trophy represents the field.'" Henrik Stenson, the 2016 British Open champion, finished in a tie for second on 15 under alongside Marc Warren. Tournament co-host Anika Sorenstam hailed Grant, who was born in Helsingborg where her grandfather settled after leaving Scotland. "What a performance. I'm so excited and so happy for Linn," 10-time women's major champion Sorenstam told Sky Sports. "She has played very well, running away from the field, but it has been nice to see her play really solid golf. This golf course is not as she has made it seem. "This shows



that we can play against each other in a fair competition. I hope we can use this and people see the quality of women's golf - Linn couldn't prove it any other way."

No evidence against PM, CM Hamza: Court

FROM PAGE 01

(NAB) cases, showing that the FIA had "mala fide" intentions. The special court, which was hearing the Rs16 billion money laundering case filed by the FIA against the premier and Hamza, granted the two pre-arrest bail last week.

"...allegation about gratification, corrupt practice, abuse of official authority, kickbacks, and commission requires further probe during the trial as at this stage cogent evidence is not available," the order read. The order said that the investigation office (IO), to date, has not mentioned in his diary that the petitioners were required to be in custody for further investigation.

The investigation of the case has been completed and the charge sheet has also been submitted, therefore, the arrests are not required, the special court said, explaining its decision to grant the petitioners bail. The order mentioned that the statements of the 64 people recorded in the case - who had deposited the amounts - relate to Rs60.7 million and not Rs16 billion - as claimed by the FIA.

'Gang of corrupts' to paralyze...

FROM PAGE 01

as prices of daily used items skyrocketed, because a flour bag was selling at Rs. 1300 in the market but the imported ministers were trying to mislead the people by presenting a rosy picture. Farrukh Habib said that the imported government destroyed the economy of the country, as stock market was crashing, rupee was depreciating and inflation was on the horizon because they did not have the courage to take bold decisions to safeguard the interest of the country and its people.

He stated that the gang of corrupts cannot purchase cheap oil from Russia, fearing it might invite wrath of their masters which they cannot afford. He said that time ripe to get rid of the country of this gang of thieves and to hold early elections in the country, which he said was the only solution to the prevailing untold problems currently facing the country. Farrukh Habib stated that the PTI well-performing government to dislodge with the mantra that the new imported government would resolve public issues forthwith but contrary to that they increased the public's woes manifolds.

The gravity of the situation warranted that the important directionless government left with no choice to stay in power anymore because they neither aptitude nor the will to address the unfolding crises in the country, because they had other priorities, he added.

Farrukh Habib said that the people rejected the corrupt junta; hence elections were needed to be held sans any further delay because only Imran Khan had the vision and policy of putting the economy back on the track and ensuring political stability in the country.

FATF meeting...

FROM PAGE 01

An announcement said that its delegates, representing 206 members of the Global Network and observer organisations, including from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations, the World Bank and the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, will take part in the event.

This hybrid event will be the last plenary under the two-year German Presidency of Dr Marcus Pleyer and will be hosted in Berlin, with a significant number of participants taking part in person. During the four days, delegates are expected to finalize key issues including a report to prevent money laundering through the real estate sector and a report that will help financial institutions use collaborative analytics, data collection and other sharing initiatives to assess and mitigate the money laundering and terrorist financing risks they face. Delegates will also discuss the assessments of measures to combat money laundering and terrorist financing in Germany and the Netherlands, and the progress made by some jurisdictions identified as presenting a risk to the financial system.

Briefs

Crypto market cap dives below \$1T

DNA

NEW YORK: Cryptocurrency market capitalization dived below \$1 trillion on Monday for the first time in 17 months, as record-high inflation around the world and the US Federal Reserve's hawkish stance continue to present risks for investors. The total value of the cryptocurrency market plummeted to \$925 billion at 0505GMT. Although the value later bounced back, it again fell to \$998 billion at 0805GMT, according to data from the digital asset price-tracking website CoinMarketCap. This marks the first time since January 2021 that the cryptocurrency market has seen its total capitalization going below the \$1 trillion level. The price of Bitcoin, the world's largest crypto by market size, fell to as low as \$24,685.36 before 0830GMT. Ethereum, the world's biggest altcoin by market value, plummeted to \$1,266.28. Both digital assets were down more than 10% for the day. While Bitcoin fell over 20% during the past week, Ethereum lost around 33% of its value. The record-high inflation in the world and the Fed's aggressive interest rate moves have caused crypto investors to adopt a risk-averse stance. After 25 and 50 basis points of rate hikes in March and May, respectively, the Fed is widely expected to hike rates another 50 basis points in each of its next meetings on Wednesday and in July. Several Fed officials in recent weeks have also indicated that the central bank could make a 75 basis point rate hike in September to lower record inflation in more than 40 years.

UN rights chief warns of global food, fuel, financial crises

DNA

GENEVA: Highlighting the horrors and risks of the war in Ukraine, the UN human rights chief on Monday warned of global food, fuel, and financial crises that risk plunging millions into food insecurity and poverty. Speaking at the opening session of the 50th Human Rights Council, Michele Bachelet said: "The war in Ukraine continues to destroy the lives of many, causing havoc and destruction. 'The horrors inflicted on the civilian population will leave their indelible mark, including on generations to come.'" She said that the war's social, economic, and political ramifications ripple across the region around Ukraine and globally, "with no end in sight." Bachelet said that 1.2 billion people live in countries severely exposed and vulnerable to all three dimensions of finance, food, and energy, simultaneously. "The World Food Program estimates that the number of severely food insecure people is expected to grow from 276 million at the start of 2022 to 323 million," said the rights chief. She cited the UN Global Crisis and Response Group, saying the combination of higher food and energy prices, growing inflation, export restrictions, and tightening financial conditions will be devastating, particularly for the most vulnerable.

Australia swears in 1st indigenous judge of SC

CANBERRA: The first indigenous judge of Australia's Supreme Court in Queensland was sworn in on Monday, local media said. Justice Lincoln Crowley, who was nominated for the post in the top court of Queensland last month, was sworn in the morning, ABC News reported.3 The broadcaster quoted Crowley as saying after the sworn in ceremony that he was "extremely proud and humbled," and that this was "also a momentous and historic occasion for the First Nations people of this state and indeed this country." The ceremony was also attended by large numbers of legal practitioners and members of the public. – DNA

Legislative Elections
Macron wins razor-thin majority in 1st round

Results published by the Interior Ministry indicate Ensemble's win of 25.75% of the votes vs. the NUPES 25.66%, a matter of 21,000 ballots, according to news outlet Radio France Int'l

FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron won a razor-thin majority in the first round of legislative elections in France on Sunday. The president's Ensemble movement faced off against the NUPES (New Ecological and Social Popular Union), a coalition of the Socialist, Communist, EELV Greens, and France Unbowed parties led by Jean-Luc Melancon. Results published by the Interior Ministry indicate Ensemble's win of 25.75% of the votes vs. the NUPES 25.66%, a matter of 21,000 ballots, according to news outlet Radio France International. The second round of elections for the National Assembly, the government's lower parliamentary house, will be held

this Sunday, June 19. Macron held a strong majority in his center-right party but knew he was up against stiff competition from the left-wing group of parties that had banded together to oppose his pro-business agenda. There are 577 seats in the National Assembly, and even though the head of state is well-positioned and has enough backing to win a large majority of those seats, polls indicate that Macron could easily lose his grip in the second round if voters do not cast ballots in his direction. Coming in third place with 18.68% of the votes was the National Rally, the right-wing party led by Marine Le Pen with whom Macron faced off in the presidential elections in April. According to an IPSOS/SopraSteria poll, Le Pen's party is projected to win a number of seats – anywhere from 20 to

45. They currently hold only eight seats in the National Assembly. Additional seats will give the National Rally a legislative advantage in the house. The Republicans won 10.42% of the votes on Sunday, the party that was at one time the stronghold in France



and was most recently led by Valerie Pécresse in the presidential race. There was a record low turnout in the weekend elections, with just 52.49% of eligible voters casting ballots. A majority win on Sunday's runoff will be out of 577 seats.

Queen Elizabeth II becomes second longest-serving monarch in history

WEB DESK

LONDON: Queen Elizabeth II, who celebrated her 70th year on the British throne earlier this month, has become the world's second longest-serving monarch, with only France's Louis XIV ahead of her in the history books. Having ruled for 70 years and 127 days, Elizabeth II has beaten the likes of Franz Joseph I, who ruled over Austria and Austro-Hungary for almost 68 years, and Thailand's Bhumibol Adulyadej, taking over the second place from the latter on Monday. Elizabeth II became queen at 25, after her father, King George VI, died on 6 February 1952. Ruling over the United Kingdom and fourteen other Commonwealth realms, she is already the longest-lived and longest-reigning British



monarch, as well as the longest currently serving head of state. Louis XIV, also known as le Roi Soleil or Sun King, reigned over France from age four, but he only took over the rule himself in 1661. Elizabeth II would have to rule until May 2024 to become the longest-serving monarch in history. Although Elizabeth II, now 96, reached the seven decades mark in February, her Platinum Jubilee celebrations were marked with four days of festivities across the UK just last weekend. Despite fewer public functions as of late due to mobility problems, the queen made an appearance at the Buckingham Palace during the Jubilee weekend. She thanked the British public at the end of the celebrations in a statement, saying that she was "humbled and touched" and that she continued to be "committed to serving you to the best of my ability."

Turkiye to extend Libya troop mandate

ANKARA: The mandate to extend the deployment of Turkish troops in Libya for an additional 18 months was submitted to Parliament on Monday. The mandate, signed by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, highlighted that Turkey continues its full-fledged support for a permanent cease-fire in the country while noting that the delayed elections that were initially scheduled to be held on Dec. 24 threaten stability. Turkey will continue to contribute to Libya's security by providing training and counseling to the Libyan military under the scope of a joint military cooperation agreement signed by both countries, according to the mandate. In 2019, Turkey's Parliament approved a security and military deal with the internationally recognized government in Libya. The deal allows Turkey to provide military training and equipment at the request of the Libyan government, which controls the capital, and some of the country's west. The memorandum also asserts Turkey's rights in the Eastern Mediterranean in the face of unilateral drilling attempts by the Greek Cypriot administration, clarifying that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) also has rights to resources in the area. – DNA



ized government in Libya. The deal allows Turkey to provide military training and equipment at the request of the Libyan government, which controls the capital, and some of the country's west. The memorandum also asserts Turkey's rights in the Eastern Mediterranean in the face of unilateral drilling attempts by the Greek Cypriot administration, clarifying that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) also has rights to resources in the area. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin met Shah Faisal Kakar, the new appointed Director General of the CARs&ECO Division of Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. – DNA

Baku, Ankara to expand ties

BAKU: Azerbaijan and Turkey have discussed issues of cooperation in cyber security, government cloud, and human capital development sectors. The discussion took place during a meeting between Azerbaijan's Digital Development and Transport Minister Rashad Nabiye and President of the Digital Transformation Office of the

Presidency of Türkiye Ali Taha Koch, who is on a visit to Baku.

Speaking about hosting the Teknofest Aerospace and Technology Festival in Azerbaijan in 2022, the parties noted that it is yet another successful example of historic friendship, brotherhood, and strategic partnership between the two countries.

The parties emphasized that the participation of President IlhamAliyev and President RecepTayyip Erdogan in the festival and the personal awarding of the winners of the competitions are an indication of the highest level of support for the Teknofest Azerbaijan event, as well as the activities of young people in the field of

technology. Noting the successful cooperation between Digital Development and Transport Ministry with the Digital Transformation Office, the sides added that the legal basis for this cooperation is the Roadmap of the Azerbaijani-Turkish Working Group on Digital Transformation, signed in Baku last September. – DNA

Azerbaijan, UN discuss multifaceted co-op

NEWS DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and UN General Assembly (UNGA) President Abdullah Shahid have discussed cooperation in multiple fields, as well as regional security, Azernews reports, citing the ministry. During the meeting held on June 13 in Baku, the sides exchanged views on Azerbaijan's activities within the UN, cooperation with specialized agencies of the international organization, future activities, and other issues on the agenda. "I was pleased to host UNGA President Abdulla Shahid at MFA Azerbaijan. We had a substantial exchange over Azerbaijan-United Nations relations, enhancing partnership with UN and its institutions. Ensuring peace, security and sustainable development in the region was mutually highlighted," Bayramov tweeted. Bayramov welcomed the visitor, noting that the visit of the UN



General Assembly president to Azerbaijan has become a tradition. He emphasized that the current visit coincides with Azerbaijan's 30th anniversary of UN membership. The minister congratulated Shahid on his successful presiden-

cy of the UN General Assembly at a time when the world is going through a very difficult period. Bayramov briefed the president on the current situation in the region, including the restoration and construction work in the liberated

territories, demining, as well as the steps taken by Azerbaijan to normalize relations with Armenia. He said that Azerbaijan would continue its efforts in all important areas to ensure peace and stability in the region, including the

signing of a future peace agreement, delimitation of borders, the opening of all communications, and other issues. Shahid hailed Azerbaijan's efforts to build lasting peace in the region. He congratulated Azerbaijan on its 30th anniversary of UN membership, noting that the country is one of the most engaged member states of the organization. The chairman applauded Azerbaijan's effective presidency of the Non-Aligned Movement. He also congratulated the Azerbaijani president for his leadership in multilateralism. The chairman recalled the globally important initiatives of the Azerbaijani president against the COVID-19 pandemic, underlining the work done at the national level to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The sides exchanged views on priority issues of the GA presidency, including work with youth, climate change, gender equality, and other topics. The officials also discussed other issues of mutual interest on the UN agenda.

Kazakhstan President to visit Russia, Iran

DNA

NUR-SULTAN: Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev is set to visit Russia and Iran this week, Kazinform has learned from the president's Telegram channel. On June 16 the Head of State is set to take part in the maiden meeting of Ul'tyqqyryltai in the newly established Ulytau region. President Tokayev is expected to participate in the jubilee 25th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 17. At the forum, the Head of State will deliver a speech at a plenary session, as well as hold a number of bilateral meetings. On June 19 the Kazakh leader will pay an official visit to Iran at the invitation of his Iranian counterpart President Ebrahim-Raisi. In Tehran President Tokayev will hold top-level bilateral talks and sign a number of intergovernmental documents.

Kazakhstan to hold national charity conference

DNA

NUR-SULTAN: Head of State Kassym-Jomart Tokayev received the Chairman of Kazakhstan khalkyna Fund BolazhZhamishyev, Kazinform cites the press service of Akorda. The President was briefed about the work done to provide charitable assistance to the citizens as well as the approaches taken to organize a charitable activity. According to Zhamishyev, the Fund has implemented 10 charitable programs and projects. In particular, eight of them were aimed at providing medical assistance, one at improving social conditions in sports for rural kids, and one at allocating educational grants for rural students and students from socially vulnerable layers of the population. During the talk, Tokayev highlighted the importance of more active involvement of the society and public institutions in defining outcome areas of the Fund. Zhamishyev also said that the Fund started developing a new changed Concept and Prospect of charitable programs and projects. This work will involve a wide range of representatives of the non-commercial sector, maslikhat deputies, business reps - benefactors of the Fund, and experts. According to the Fund's Chairman, the public will be regularly updated on all relevant information about work done, which will result in a national charity conference to take place in September this year.

Sweden is taking Türkiye's concerns 'very seriously'

DNA

GOTHENBURG: Stockholm is taking Türkiye's concerns about Sweden and Finland's applications to join NATO "very seriously," the Swedish prime minister said on Monday. Speaking at a joint news conference with visiting NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Magdalena Andersson said both Sweden and Finland will be security providers for the region and for entire NATO, including Türkiye. Stoltenberg, for his part, stressed that security concerns of all NATO allies should be addressed. The NATO chief said Andersson confirmed the Swedish government's readiness to address Türkiye's concerns. When asked about the talks between Sweden, Finland, Türkiye, and NATO, Stoltenberg said: "I don't think it would be helpful if I go into the details of those talks". He, however, added: "They indicate that Sweden and Finland are ready to in a concrete way address concerns related to terrorism." Russia's war on Ukraine prompted Finland and Sweden to formally apply to join NATO on May 18. But Türkiye, a longstanding member of the alliance, has voiced objections to their membership bids, criticizing the countries for tolerating and even supporting terrorist groups such as the YPG/PKK, as well as for weapons embargos against Türkiye.

Briefs

PTI
announces
candidates
for Punjab
by-polls

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The PTI Monday announced its candidates for the Punjab by-elections, slated for July 17, as the party seeks to retain the seats it lost last month. Twenty-five lawmakers – 20 elected on general and five on reserved seats – were de-notified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on May 23 for going against party lines and voting for Hamza Shahbaz in the chief minister's election. ECP earlier this month ruled that the allocation of reserved seats – three women and two minorities – would be notified after the conclusion of the by-election for 20 vacant Punjab Assembly seats. Read more: ECP delays issuing notification for reserved seats in Punjab Assembly. In a bid to secure the reserved seats, the PTI had asked the ECP to issue the notification based on the current numbers in the Punjab Assembly, but the election body ruled that it would notify the allocation of reserved seats once the by-election takes place on July 17 – and the new party position is formed. The by-elections will take place on PP-7, PP-83, PP-90, PP-97, PP-125, PP-127, PP-140, PP-158, PP-167, PP-168, PP-170, PP-202, PP-217, PP-224, PP-228, PP-237, PP-272, PP-273, PP-282 Layyah, and PP-288. Taking to Twitter Monday, PTI Central Information Secretary Farrukh Habib said the party's parliamentary board approved the candidates' list for the by-polls and has allocated tickets to the respective people.

Fresh fires
erupt in
various forests
of Swat

DNA

SWAT: Fresh fires erupted in the mountains and forests of Swat on Monday as authorities claim to have doused over 70 fires in different locations of the district since June 1. According to district administration officials, an operation was underway to control the fresh fires, which broke out in the hills of Babuzai, Barikot, Charbagh, Khwazakhela and Kabal tehsils. Meanwhile, the fire in the mountains of Marghuzar – a popular tourist destination in Swat – could not be extinguished on the third day as it extended to Manyar, Gahalegey, and other mountains of Barikot tehsil. Officials said a fire dousing operation was underway in the mountains of Marghuzar and other areas where fresh fires erupted. Teams were dispatched to the hills of Shamelai Sangota and Muhammad Baig in Babuzai tehsil; Shalhand in Kabal tehsil; Amlookdara, Gahalegey and Manyar in Barikot tehsil; Toha in Charbagh tehsil; and Chinkolai in Khwazakhela tehsil.

Govt decides
to ban old
buses in
Karachi

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh transport department has announced to ban old and outdated buses playing in Karachi after the completion of mass transit projects. This was announced by Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, who also holds the portfolio of the transport and mass transit department. In a statement, Memon said that the provincial government had conveyed the decision to the representative associations of the operators of public transport services in the city. "Thousands of buses are being brought to Karachi for which talks have been held with China and Turkey," he said. He further said that People's Bus Service would begin in Karachi in the current month.

CM happy with budget,
terms it poor friendly

OUR CORRESPONDENT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has termed the provincial budget for financial year 2022-23 as a pro-poor and a historic budget and said that this was the largest ever budget in the history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with an outlay of Rs. 1332 billion adding that all the sectors have been fully focused in the budget which on implementation, would bring about a new era of development in the province and bring visible positive change in the lives of the masses. "Despite the difficult financial situation, the provincial government did not compromise on the developmental portfolio, and Rs. 418 billion have been allocated for the developmental projects," he said and added that special focus has been given to the ongoing developmental projects of public welfare so as to complete these projects well in time to facilitate the people without any delay. In a statement issued here regarding the budget for the financial year 2022-23, the chief minister said that all possible efforts had been made to provide significant relief to the common man in the budget adding that over 63 thousand employees were being regularized in this budget including

KP presents Rs1.332tr
outlay budget

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has presented its budget for the fiscal year 2022-23 with a total outlay of Rs1.332 trillion. The PTI government presented its budget quite smoothly in the KP Assembly on Monday. The budget speech was delivered by provincial Finance Minister Taimur Saleem Jhagra. During his speech, the finance minister announced a 16% increase in the salaries of government employees and 15% raise in pensions. He also announced to increase Shuhada Package. Mr Jhagra said that tax revenue from federal government would amount to Rs537 billion. While Rs319.2 billion have been proposed for the development budget. He said that Rs4.9 billion have been set aside for the improvement of climate change. Higher

58000 teachers, around 700 doctors and project employees of other departments.

education will get Rs34 billion. The finance minister boasted that the tax recoveries by the KP government were phenomenal during the outgoing fiscal, adding that foreign investors are making Rs86 billion investments in the province. He said that Rs14 billion have been earmarked under the head of law and justice; Rs1.8 billion set aside for information technology; Rs1 billion for labour; Rs3.6 billion for population welfare; Rs23 billion for relief department; Rs820.3 million for housing; Rs22 billion for sport; and Rs2 billion have been allocated for climate change. The KP finance minister said the provincial government has made a 15% increase in the allowances of police, rescue, and forest department officials. Earlier, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet approved the provincial budget. The KP cabinet met in Peshawar on Monday and gave approval to Rs1.332 trillion budget for the province.

Besides a total of 31% increase has been made in the salaries of government em-

ployees including 15% Disparity Reduction Allowance (DRA) given in the march this year. Similarly, 15% increase has also been made in the pension of retired government employees. He said that Rs. 26 billion had been allocated for Insaf Food Card program in order to give relief to the vulnerable segments of the society.

The chief minister said that social sector has been the top most priority of PTI government from the very first day adding that budget of education, health and other social sectors has also been increased in the new year budget. He termed the Sehat Card Plus Scheme a flagship and pro-poor project of the provincial government and said that various new initiatives have been proposed to make it more comprehensive adding that free treatment of Bone marrow transplant, thalassemia and other diseases was being included in the scheme. Similarly, he stated that tax rate in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which was reduced in current budget will also be maintained in the new fiscal year, whereas more than Rs. 25 billion would be spent on providing loans to small scale industrialists and youth. He felicitated the Provincial Finance Minister Taimur Saleem Jhagra, Chief Secretary Dr. Shahzad Bangash, Additional Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah and their team for presenting a balanced budget despite difficult financial situation.

Germany
declines
to confirm
Scholz Kyiv
visit

AGENCIES

BERLIN: A German government spokesperson declined to confirm a media report on Monday that Chancellor Olaf Scholz would travel to Kyiv on Thursday with French President Emmanuel Macron and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi. Online magazine Focus, citing Italian newspaper La Stampa, earlier reported that the three European leaders would travel to the Ukrainian capital on Thursday, adding a specific date to a Bild am Sonntag report on Sunday that they planned to go before a Group of Seven summit at the end of June. "We still do not confirm that," the spokesperson said. Scholz, who has not been to Kyiv since the start of the war, has faced criticism abroad for his caution in supplying Ukraine with heavy arms such as tanks and howitzers, and has been forced to reject criticism that Berlin is not showing leadership. At home, frustration has also grown among Scholz's junior coalition partners over what they say are shortcomings in his leadership on Ukraine, an internal rift that risks undermining Western unity against Russia.

Canada
decries
official's visit
to Russian
embassy event

AGENCIES

TORONTO: It was "unacceptable" for a Canadian official to have attended Russia Day celebrations at the country's embassy in Canada, foreign affairs minister Melanie Joly said on Sunday. A deputy protocol chief in Canada's global affairs department, Yase-min Heinbecker, attended Friday's event, along with representatives of Egypt, Pakistan and some African nations, the Globe and Mail newspaper said in a report. "No Canadian representative should have attended the event hosted at the Russian embassy and no Canadian representative will attend this kind of event again," Joly said in a Twitter post. Joly also reiterated Canada's support for Ukraine against Russia's invasion, which Moscow calls a "special military operation". Since the conflict began on Feb. 24, Canada has imposed sanctions on more than 1,000 individuals and bodies with ties to Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Rain-wind
thunderstorm
likely at
various places

ISLAMABAD: Gusty/dust raising winds are likely in south Punjab and upper Sindh with rain-wind/thunderstorm in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, south Punjab, Gilgit Baltistan, Kashmir and its adjoining hilly areas on Tuesday during evening or night. This was revealed by Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) in its daily forecast. Mainly very hot and dry weather is expected in most plain areas of the country. However, dust-thunderstorm/rain is likely in Multan, Dera Ghazi Khan, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Sahiwal and Rahim Yar Khan during evening or night. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hot and dry weather is expected in most plain districts of the province. However, rain-wind/thunderstorm is likely in Kohistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Buner, Kalam, Mardan, Abbottabad and Kurram during evening or night. The weather will remain very hot and dry in most parts of Sindh. While in Balochistan, hot weather is expected in most parts of the province. However, dust-thunderstorm/rain is likely in Kalat, Khuzdar, Barkhan and Sibbi. Partly cloudy weather with rain-wind/thunderstorm is expected in Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. – APP

Israel urges
nationals to leave
Turkey over threat

AGENCIES

TEL AVIV: Israel's Foreign Minister Yair Lapid on Monday urged citizens in Turkey to leave "as soon as possible" over threats that Iranian operatives are actively planning attacks on Israelis in Istanbul. "It's a real and immediate danger," Lapid told a meeting of lawmakers from his Yesh Atid party, citing "several Iranian attempts at carrying out terror attacks against Israelis on holiday in Istanbul." "If you are already in Istanbul, return to Israel as soon as possible," Lapid said. "If you have planned a flight to Istanbul – cancel. No vacation is worth your life," he added. "Do not fly to Turkey at all," unless such travel is "essential," the foreign minister added.

Iran and Israel are arch rivals and Tehran has accused the Jewish state of carrying out a series of assassinations targeting senior Ira-

nian nuclear and military personnel. Most recently, Iran claimed that Israel was responsible for the killing of Revolutionary Guards Col Sayyad Khodai, who was shot dead outside his Tehran home on May 22. Lapid made no reference to any alleged Israeli operations inside Iran. But he said that some Israelis who recently travelled to Turkey had returned "without knowing their lives were saved". The alleged attackers were targeting Israeli citizens "in order to kidnap them or kill them," Lapid said. Earlier Monday, Israel's public broadcaster Kan reported on Iranian plans to kidnap Israelis in Turkey a month ago, which was thwarted after Israel alerted Ankara about the threat. Lapid thanked the Turkish government "for the effort they're putting into protecting the lives of Israeli citizens," without providing details.

Turkish
Ambassador calls
on Air Chief

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador H.E. Mr. Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office on Monday. During the meeting, both dignitaries discussed matters of professional and mutual interest. While appreciating professionalism of Pakistan Air Force, Turkish Ambassador H.E. Mr. Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul acknowledged PAF's rising indigenous capacity in aviation industry. The Air Chief said that Pakistan and Turkiye have longstanding religious, cultural and historical bonds which were manifested through strong ties between the Air Forces of two countries. The Air Chief highlighted that both the countries enjoy cordial relations and reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

APNS
condemns
journalist
kidnapping

DNA

KARACHI: The APNS condemns the kidnapping of Mr Nafees Naeem, a senior Journalist of the Business Recorder Group. The APNS in a press release stated that the incidents of kidnapping, harassment and maltreatment of journalists are consistently increasing and have remained unchecked. The APNS urged upon the Chief Minister Sindh and IG Police to take immediate action and recover the missing journalist without further delay. A journalist working for a private television channel was taken away by unidentified men from near his residence in Karachi on Monday, according to his family and the police.

Zardari meets Ch
Shujaat at his residence

Ch Shujaat said the PML-Q was committed to its promises with national parties and cooperation would continue in broader interest of the nation

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians President Asif Ali Zardari has said that national federal government is standing with the Pakistan Muslim League-Q, which is standing with the government on its part. He said this in a meeting with PML-Q President Ch Shujaat Hussain at his residence here on Monday. He said that the two National Assembly members of the PML-Q were part of the cabinet in the federal government. He said that Ch Shujaat is an asset to the national politics. Ch Shujaat said that the PML-Q was committed to its promises with the na-



tional parties and the co-operation would continue in broader interest of the nation. Federal Minister Tariq Bashir Cheema told the media that Asif Zardari had come to congratulate the PML-Q leadership over becoming part of the feder-

al cabinet. Both the leaderships discussed matters of national interests. Earlier, Federal Ministers Ch Tariq Bashir Cheema, Ch Salik Hussain and Ch Shafay Hussain welcomed Asif Zardari on his arrival at Ch Shujaat's residence. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul calls on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force. – DNA

Pakistan, India keep up nuclear arms race pace
Post-cold war nuclear arsenal decline era at an end

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The pace of a nuclear arms war between arch-nemesis Pakistan and India is keeping up the pace with both countries now looking at expanding delivery systems in a world where nuclear-capable countries continue to expand stockpiles and nuclear technologies. This was disclosed in a report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute as it published findings from its annual Yearbook 2022, a private television channel reported Monday. The report said that after a post-cold war era where successful efforts were made to reduce the number of nuclear warheads around the world, their numbers have once again started showing signs that they may grow once more, while nuclear-armed countries continue to modernize their nuclear arsenals and expand technologies for delivery of these weapons. The nine nuclear-armed states—the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)—although the total number of nuclear weapons declined slightly between January 2021 and January 2022, the number will probably in-

crease in the next decade. Of the total inventory of an estimated 12,705 warheads at the start of 2022, about 9,440 were in military stockpiles for potential use. Of those, an estimated 3,732 warheads were deployed with missiles and aircraft, and around 2,000—nearly all of which belonged to Russia or the USA—were kept in a state of high operational alert. Although Russian and US total warhead inventories continued to decline in 2021, this was due to the dismantling of warheads which had been retired from military service several years ago. The number of warheads in the two countries' useable military stockpiles remained relatively stable in 2021. Both countries' deployed strategic nuclear forces were within the limits set by a bilateral nuclear arms reduction treaty (2010 Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, New START). Note, however, that New START does not limit total non-strategic nuclear warhead inventories. "There are clear indications that the reductions that have characterized global nuclear arsenals since the end of the cold war have ended," said Hans M. Kristensen, Associate Senior Fellow with SIPRI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme and Director of the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists (FAS).

"All of the nuclear-armed states are increasing or upgrading their arsenals and most are sharpening nuclear rhetoric and the role nuclear weapons play in their military strategies," said Wilfred Wan, Director of SIPRI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Program. "This is a very worrying trend." Nuclear-armed countries are continuing with an arms race. Even if that does not mean the creation of new warheads and expansion in stockpiles, it is manifesting itself in the development of new, more mobile delivery systems. India and Pakistan, the report said, appear to be expanding their nuclear arsenals, and both countries introduced and continued to develop new types of nuclear delivery systems in 2021. Russia and the USA together possess over 90% of all nuclear weapons. The other seven nuclear-armed states are either developing or deploying new weapon systems, or have announced their intention to do so. China, SIPRI said, is in the middle of a substantial expansion of its nuclear weapon arsenal, which satellite images indicate includes the construction of over 300 new missile silos. Several additional nuclear warheads are thought to have been assigned to operational forces in 2021 following the delivery of new mobile launchers and a submarine. The United Kingdom in 2021 announced its decision to increase the ceiling on its total

warhead stockpile, in a reversal of decades of gradual disarmament policies. While criticizing China and Russia for lack of nuclear transparency, the UK also announced that it would no longer publicly disclose figures for the country's operational nuclear weapon stockpile, deployed warheads or deployed missiles. In early 2021 France officially launched a programme to develop a third-generation nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN). Israel—which does not publicly acknowledge possessing nuclear weapons—is also believed to be modernizing its nuclear arsenal. North Korea continues to prioritize its military nuclear programme as a central element of its national security strategy. While North Korea conducted no nuclear test explosions or long-range ballistic missile tests during 2021, SIPRI estimates that the country has now assembled up to 20 warheads, and possesses enough fissile material for a total of 45–55 warheads. "If the nuclear-armed states take no immediate and concrete action on disarmament, then the global inventory of nuclear warheads could soon begin to increase for the first time since the cold war," said Matt Korda, Associate Researcher with SIPRI's Weapons of Mass Destruction Program and Senior Research Associate with the FAS Nuclear Information Project.